


Best practices for Indigenous cultural safety

in post-secondary training
programs leading to employment
in the mining sector



Pôle
**enseignement
supérieur**
SECTEUR MINIER



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Preface	3
Introduction	4
Objectives	5
Methodology	6
1. Literature review	6
2. Interview	6
3. Focus groups	7
Cultural safety	8
Key challenges that face Indigenous students	10
Historical factors	10
Representation in programs	11
Culture shock	11
Educational level	12
Atypical school paths	13
Poverty	13
Discrimination	14
Social problems	15
1. Partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations	15
1.1 Partnerships	15
1.2 Support for Indigenous organizations	20
2. Ressources, services and support	20
2.1 Representation, recognition and spatial planning	21
2.2 Personalized welcome	24
2.3 Support staff	25
2.4 Mentoring and tutoring	31
2.5 Accommodation, transportation and daycare	33
2.6 Policies against harassment, racism and discrimination	35
3. Staff training	36
4. School curriculum	38
4.1 Pedagogical approaches and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches	39
4.2 Programs and courses exclusively for Indigenous students	46
4.3 Flexibility in teaching	47
4.4 Internships and training at mining sites	50
5. Recruitment	53
6. Financial support	55
Conclusion	57
References	58

Preface

Documents No. 1 - *Meilleures pratiques de sécurisation culturelle autochtone des programmes de formation postsecondaire menant à des emplois dans le secteur minier (2024)* [*Best practices for Indigenous cultural safety in post-secondary training programs leading to employment in the mining sector (2024)*] and No. 2 - *Outil d'analyse de la pertinence culturelle autochtone des programmes de formation postsecondaire menant à des emplois dans le secteur minier (2024)* [*Analytical tool of Indigenous cultural relevance of post-secondary training programs leading to employment in the mining sector (2024)*] go hand in hand. The *Best practices* document presents a synthesis of the various actions taken by educational institutions that work in an Indigenous context to enhance the cultural relevance of their training programs. For a more in-depth look at certain topics, we suggest you consult cited references, which offer more in-depth analyses of the ideas synthesized in *Best practices*. Based on a literature review, interviews and focus groups, an analytical grid was created (*Outil d'analyse de la pertinence culturelle autochtone des programmes de formation postsecondaire menant à des emplois dans le secteur minier (2024)*) [*Analytical tool of Indigenous cultural relevance of post-secondary training programs leading to employment in the mining sector (2024)*]. Each of the indicators presented in the grid is accompanied by a reference to the page on which the content is described in this document.

While all the practices identified have the potential to be relevant to an educational program or institution, the choice to implement them should always be made in partnership and consultation with students and interested Indigenous authorities. For example, in section 2.1 concerning spatial planning, many authors recommend to build an outdoor cultural space. This initiative should be carried out in collaboration and consultation with students and Indigenous groups to ensure that it adequately meets the needs of users.

This internal and confidential self-assessment method allows researchers measure the cultural relevance of training programs and identifies the fields and actions to prioritize to make our way towards cultural safety.

Introduction

The automation of operations is becoming increasingly recommended in the mining industry worldwide (Fisher & Schnittger, 2012; Nurmi & Molnár, 2014; Oshokoya & Tetteh, 2018) and Canada is no exception (Mining Industry Human Resources Council [MiHR], 2020c). This process makes it possible to replace certain blue-collar (Borenstein, 2011; Horberry et al., 2016) or high-risk positions (Janta et al., 2011; McNeely, 1992). In Canada and Australia, drilling, blasting as well as train and truck driving account for around 70% of mining jobs and are more likely to be targeted by automation (Holcombe & Kemp, 2019). These jobs are often held by local populations or by people from minority groups (Janta et al., 2011; McNeely, 1992), including the Indigenous¹ (Brereton & Parmenter, 2008; Cox & Mill, 2015; Holcombe & Kemp, 2019; Rodon & Lévesque, 2015). The gains made in recent years in terms of Indigenous employment in the mining industry could thus be ruined if nothing is done to compensate for future job losses caused by technological advances (Holcombe & Kemp, 2019; Holcombe, 2020). This is an issue of concern since Indigenous and other minority groups face several challenges related to social inequalities, including lack of training (Ciceri & Scott, 2006; Daly & Gebremedhin, 2015; Fang & Gunderson, 2015; Kalb et al., 2014). Given the mining industry's infatuation with automation, autonomization, robotics, and artificial intelligence, stakeholders are raising questions about the types of training programs that will be needed to ensure the place of the Indigenous in this sector over the long term (Holcombe, 2020).

The mining world will require new skills with technological developments. However, only 12.1% of First Nations, 15.3% of Métis and 3.1% of Inuit persons in Canada between the ages of 25 and 64 had a university degree in 2021 as compared to 29.9% of the general population (Statistics Canada, 2021). In the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, the rate of “undereducation” (no diploma) is 40% among Indigenous people as compared to 20%

¹ According to the MiHR Council (2019), the Indigenous in Canada account for around 7% of people employed in the mining industry. This percentage varies considerably from one Indigenous people or community to another, in particular according to whether agreements have been signed with governments or the industry (Caron et al., 2019).

among the non-Indigenous (Observatoire de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue, 2019). While this gap can be explained in part by historical, socioeconomic, and cultural factors, inadequate pedagogical methods and their lack of cultural relevance at the post-secondary level² also contribute to it (Colomb, 2012; Gingras-Lacroix & Labra, 2021; Timmons, 2009). To increase graduation rates, the education system must develop educational services that are relevant to Indigenous people and offer training that meets their needs (Institut de coopération pour l'éducation des adultes [ICÉA], 2018). It was from this angle that this research project took an interest in best practices in Indigenous post-secondary education.

Objectives

The overall objective of the project was to develop an analytical and decision-making tool and to suggest courses of action to enhance the cultural relevance of post-secondary programs related to the mining sector. More specifically, this research project aimed to:

- a) identify best practices related to the provision of culturally relevant training in an Indigenous context.
- b) develop a tool to analyze the cultural relevance of training offered to Indigenous people interested in employment in the mining industry.
- c) identify, in collaboration with an advisory committee, courses of action to promote the cultural relevance of training programs.

² “Post-secondary” includes the following programs: certificate or diploma for apprenticeship or from a trade school (including vocational training centres); certificate or diploma from a college, CEGEP, or other non-university educational institution; university certificate or diploma inferior to the bachelor's degree and university degree (Institut de la statistique du Québec, 2022; Statistics Canada, 2010).

Methodology

1. Literature review

To achieve specific objective (a), a literature review was conducted using keywords, in French and English, in the EBSCO, ProQuest and Google Scholar³ research tools in January 2023. The focus was on publications concerning training in an Indigenous context in Quebec, the rest of Canada, Australia, New Zealand, and the United States. These countries were selected for their comparable realities. As former British colonies, these countries are similar in many aspects: political, legislative, economic, and social (Vanguers, 2021). In addition, Australia and Canada have similar economic structures, including a significant mining industry (Stevens, 2009). Based on title, abstract, and keywords, 250 publications⁴ were selected and assessed in detail. To be considered relevant, publications had to document post-secondary education practices in an Indigenous context. The information was then grouped thematically to identify leading practices in relation to the cultural relevance of programs to develop a preliminary version of the analytical tool (specific objective (c)).

2. Interview

To achieve specific objectives (a) and (b), recorded semi-structured interviews lasting approximately 45 minutes were conducted with individuals from three categories of stakeholders offering post-secondary training related to the mining industry: Indigenous organizations, mining sector organizations, and regional educational organizations. Researchers recruited participants using a non-probabilistic method, and the latter were identified based on their experience and knowledge of post-secondary training programs related to the mining industry. They were contacted by e-mail until information saturation was reached. A total of 42 people took part in the interviews: 18 from mining organizations, 14 from regional post-secondary organizations, and 10 from Indigenous organizations. The organizations were all located in one of Quebec's three main mining regions: Abitibi-

³ Various combinations of the following keywords were used: formation, évaluation de programme, pertinence culturelle, sécurisation culturelle, sécurité culturelle, études supérieures, études postsecondaires, autochtones, Premières Nations, métis, Inuit, industrie minière, mines/training, vocational training, program evaluation, cultural relevance, cultural safety, education, resource extraction, Indigenous, Natives, Métis, First Nations, Inuit, and mining

⁴ Books, book chapters, scientific articles, research reports, and best practice guides, etc.

Témiscamingue, Côte-Nord, and Nord-du-Québec (Eeyou Istchee Baie-James). In this report, participants are identified by a code with the following meaning: the letters "M", "E", or "O" represent a mining industry organization, an educational organization or an Indigenous organization, followed by the person's gender: male "H" or female "F". Next comes the group with which the person identified: Eeyou (Cree) "C", Anicinape "A", Innu "I", or non-Indigenous "X". Finally, a sequential number from 1 to 42 corresponds to 1 of the 42 participants. For example, an Anicinape man working for an Indigenous organization who participated in the 37th interview would have the following code: (OHA37). All interviews were transcribed and thematically analyzed using NVivo software (QSR International). The analysis was both deductive and inductive, and it enabled us to improve the tool for analysis of the cultural relevance of programs (specific objective (b)) as well as to confirm the relevance of best practices compiled in scientific publications.

3. Focus groups

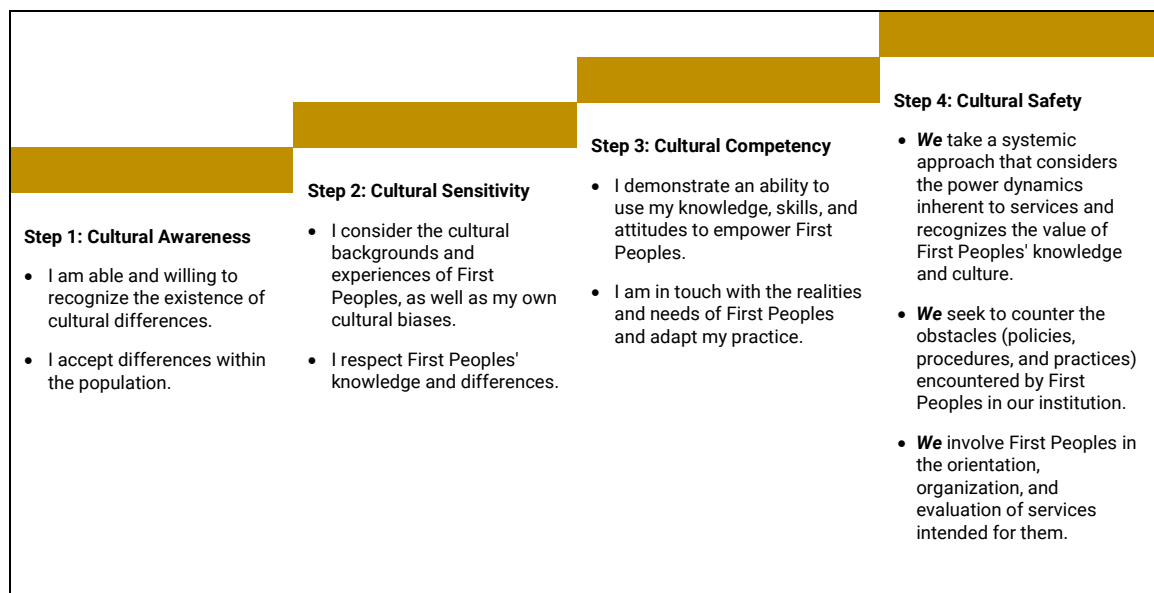
An advisory committee made up of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members assessed the tool to verify that specific objective (c) had been attained. As part of this exercise, the solutions put forward were discussed, debated, and validated at two meetings held in the fall of 2023. The committee was made up of nine members who worked in one or another of the three types of organization mentioned earlier. In this report, each focus group participant was identified by a code as follows: the letter "G" represents the focus group, the letters "M", "E", or "O" represents a mining industry organization, a regional school organization or an Indigenous organization, the person's gender (male "H" or female "F") as well as the group with which he or she identifies, Eeyou (Cree) "C", Anicinape "A", Innu "I" or non-Indigenous "X". The code ends with a sequential number from 1 to 9, that corresponds to one of the nine participants. For example, an Innu woman working for a school organization who was the fifth participant in the discussion groups would have the following code: (GEFI5).

Cultural safety

The majority of studies consulted emphasize the importance of Indigenous identity and cultural safety in education. This concept was formalized by Maori nurse Irihapeti Ramsden in the late 1980s in response to the concerns of Indigenous health professionals about the lack of training in cultural dimensions as well as the marginalization and discrimination experienced within non-Indigenous health care systems (Blanchet Garneau & Pépin, 2012; Dufour, 2015b; Ramsden, 2002). Cultural security “is based on the idea that feelings of comfort, safety, and respectful service attribution are determined by the experience of the beneficiaries themselves” (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022, p. 4). Unsafe practices include any type of action that diminishes a person's well-being, devalues them, and uproots their cultural identity (Williams, 1999).

Figure 1.

Steps to Cultural Safety (CAPRES, 2018; Lévesque, 2017)



The cultural safety approach is an organizational and social transformation that revises public policies that affect Indigenous populations so they rethink practices through decolonization and self-determination (Réseau DIALOG, UQO, UQAT, & CESSPNQL, 2021). Implementing this concept requires acknowledgment of the obstacles introduced by colonialism and working in collaboration with Indigenous authorities to better assess and correct the leanings of services (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022). First and foremost, workers must be made aware of cultural knowledge and differences to develop their own cultural awareness (Consortium d’animation sur la persévérance et la réussite en enseignement supérieur [CAPRES], 2018). Cultural safety represents the final stage of the cultural security process, which takes place at both individual and institutional levels. Cultural safety can be achieved by “the creation and application of so-called culturally sensitive administrative, organizational, curricular, and educational measures as part of a concerted action, but [the institution] must also consider the students' experience and response in order to assess their effectiveness” (Dufour, 2015, p. 40). It is therefore essential to put forward an institutional policy that guides interventions in all spheres of activity of post-secondary educational establishments to achieve this level. Achieving a sense of security is a long process that requires ongoing efforts as well as one-off activities. There is no single solution that makes the difference; rather, it is the accumulation of several actions that yields results (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022). We must therefore avoid limiting ourselves to certain actions that are simpler or less costly to implement (“cherry picking”). For example, setting up a room for Indigenous students without implementation of other measures will have a limited effect (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Dufour, 2019; Lefevre-Radelli & Jérôme, 2017; Robert-Careau, 2019). It is also important to be vigilant so as not to fall into tokenism, i.e. to clear one's name by a superficial gesture or by the instrumentalization of an Indigenous person in order to “*tick a box*” (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Dufour, 2015; Lefevre-Radelli, 2019; Robert-Careau, 2019).

We identified the main challenges faced by Indigenous students regarding post-secondary education, which we presented in the next section. To address these challenges, we identified six best practices in post-secondary education that can apply to the mining field, which we will explain in detail in the following sections: (1) Partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations; (2) Resources, services and support; (3) Staff training; (4) Curriculum; (5) Recruitment; and (6) Financial support.

Key challenges that face Indigenous students

To identify best practices in post-secondary education for Indigenous students, we must first paint a picture of the challenges that they face.

Historical factors

Certain historical events had systemic consequences that continue to affect the lives of Indigenous people today. For example, some include the Canadian government's assimilation policies, such as the *Indian Act* (1876), the creation of reserves, and compulsory schooling. At the end of the 19th century, “residential schools” were created by Christian churches and the Canadian government to assimilate the Indigenous (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada [TRC], 2015).⁵ The residential school experience is still recent, and the trauma and repercussions are still with us (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022).

⁵ In Quebec, residential schools were Fort George (Anglican, 1934-1979, and Catholic, 1936-1952), Sept-Îles (1952-1971), Saint-Marc-de-Figuery (1955-1973), Pointe-Bleue (1957-1991), and La Tuque (1963-1978) (TRC, 2015).

Representation in programs

Indigenous students do not feel represented in most current post-secondary programs, where Indigenous visions, cultures, values, and traditions are absent (Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples [RCAP], 1996; Holmes, 2006; Malatest et al., 2002). In addition, teachers and professors have little or no knowledge of Indigenous cultures.

Culture shock

For many Indigenous people, post-secondary education means leaving their families and communities and uprooting themselves (Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021). From family, community and territory is difficult for many. (Boulet, 2017; Dufour, 2015; Cornellier, 2015; Gauthier et al., 2015; Landry et al., 2019; Rodon et al., 2015; Savard et al., 2021). Culture shock is difficult to cope with, given the gap between community life and university life in urban centres (Cote-Meek, 2014; Council of Ministers of Education, Canada [CMEC], 2012; First Nations Human Resources Development Commission of Quebec [FNHRDCQ], 2019; Mareshal & Denault, 2020; Rondon, 2008; Walton et al., 2020). The culture shock experienced by Indigenous students can be caused by a variety of factors, such as lack of community support, isolation, classroom group size, or misunderstanding on the part of one's circle (Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec [RCAAQ], 2020). These factors make some students reluctant to leave their community to study:

With us [Indigenous people], sometimes it's a big deal to take a young person from our home, here in the reserve, to Val-d'Or or Montreal. They're guarded, they're intimidated. On the reserve, you're more comfortable. At the Raglan Mine, with the Inuit, it's not easy to get a young person who's at ease in his little community of 900 people into a mine of 1,000 (...). When you do a small cultural thing at the beginning, it gives you confidence. It creates a relationship with these young people. They lose that guard. They're more confident. (OHA37)

The culture shock experienced by Indigenous students stems in part from differences in the concepts of time, culture, and education (Table 1).

Table 1.

Cultural Differences in the Perception of Time, Culture and Education
(Dufour, 2015b; Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022).

Concept	Indigenous	Non-Indigenous
Time	Circular	Linear
Culture	Communitarian	Individualist
Education	Holistic	Disciplinary

Some Indigenous students also face linguistic challenges in their post-secondary careers. For most students, English or French is not their first language (Battiste, 2013; Cazin, 2005; Cornellier, 2015; RCAP, 1996; Rodon, 2008; Sarmiento, 2017; Savard et al., 2021). In addition, some French-only courses are more difficult to access for Indigenous students who speak English as a second language, and vice versa. These challenges were highlighted during the training of Indigenous workers for the mining industry (Benoît, 2004; Caron & Asselin, 2020).

Educational level

Low educational attainment is a frequent barrier to access post-secondary education which, when combined with disparities in the content and quality of primary and secondary education, disadvantages Indigenous students, especially in remote areas (Rodon, 2008). Furthermore, many Indigenous people take a break between high school and post-secondary education, which sometimes requires an upgrade in the technological tools needed for training (Savard et al., 2021; Vladicka, 2015). This lack of preparation for post-secondary studies leads to several challenges for these students (Association of Canadian Community Colleges [ACCC], 2008; Cornellier, 2015; Gauthier et al., 2015; Holmes, 2006; Malatest et al., 2004).

Atypical school paths

In Canada, most Indigenous students attending post-secondary institutions are first-generation female students, many of whom have families to support (Bonin, 2019; Cazin, 2005; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Jérôme, 2017; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2004; Rodon, 2008). Being a first-generation student has an impact on perseverance and motivation, due to sometimes lower levels of parental support and a lack of role models (Bonin et al., 2015). Training courses must also take account of the fact that Indigenous students often must combine work, study, and family life (Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2002; Sarmiento, 2017; Savard et al., 2021; Vladicka, 2015).

Indigenous people tend to be older than non-Indigenous people when they start their post-secondary path (Bonin, 2019). This reality does not correspond to the model of the full-time, single, and childless student who lives at home that is still considered the norm (Ratel & Pilote, 2021). Finally, the paths of Indigenous students are diverse and can be divided into three categories (Sarmiento, 2017). The “long, even path” is a conventional path with no interruptions. The “uneven pathway”, which represents that of many Indigenous students, refers to a pathway with several school dropouts. The “exceptional long path” is the achievement of a university degree that follows several difficult social and economic situations (Sarmiento, 2017; Savard et al., 2021). In the Université du Québec (UQ) network, 57.8% of Indigenous students say they have interrupted their studies in the past at the high school, college, or university levels, compared with 43.8% of non-Indigenous students (Bonin, 2019).

Poverty

In 2019, 47% of First Nations children lived in poverty in Canada and 29% in Quebec (Assembly of First Nations [AFN], 2019). This factor greatly hinders academic success (Dufour and Bousquet, 2016; Malatest et al., 2002; Savard et al., 2021), and it means that few Indigenous students can rely on their families for financial assistance during their studies (Holmes, 2006). Moreover, Indigenous students generally have fewer savings than non-Indigenous to undertake post-secondary studies (Acumen Research Group, 2006). In addition, considering the cost of living and the related expenses of a study project such as housing, school supplies, and daycare, financial support programs for post-secondary

studies are insufficient (First Nations Education Council [FNEC], 2009; Cornellier, 2015; RCAP, 1996; Rodon, 2008; Herkimer, 2021). For example, the Indigenous Community Support Fund (ISC) fund has not been adjusted for inflation, in addition to having undergone cuts several times (Stonechild, 2006).⁶ Moreover, there is also a certain lack of awareness of the services offered by educational institutions, including post-secondary assistance programs for Indigenous students (Acumen Research Group, 2006; Joncas, 2013).

Discrimination

Discrimination, racism, and systemic racism affect the lives of Indigenous students in many ways and have a significant impact on their success and career paths (Alberta Education, 2006; Battiste, 2013; Cazin, 2005; Cornellier, 2015; Malatest et al., 2004; Mendelson, 2006; Viens, 2019). For example, landlords refuse to rent housing to Indigenous students (Cazin, 2005; Cornellier, 2015; Walton et al., 2020). In a study conducted at the *Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue* (UQAT) and the *Cégep de l'Abitibi-Témiscamingue* (CAT), students mentioned that they “enjoy good relations with non-Indigenous people, which is not always the case in the city” (Cornellier, 2015, p. 26). That said, discrimination is still sometimes present within the educational institution itself. For example, an Indigenous nursing student at the CAT reported racist remarks made by her internship supervisor about First Nations people as part of a training activity (Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec [FECQ], 2017).

⁶ Justin Trudeau's Liberal government made up some ground in 2016-2017 but did not fully meet the needs of the population (Herkimer, 2021).

Social problems

In some communities, the presence of social problems that result from colonial and assimilative violence (forced settlement, residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, the sled dog slaughter, etc.) created several issues: cultural and identity uprooting, loss of bearings, poverty, lack of services, issues of addiction, depression, spousal and family violence, suicides, overcrowded housing, health problems, malnutrition, etc. (Dufour, 2019). These systemic problems created an overrepresentation of Indigenous people in the justice system that is a barrier to employment in many industries. For example, criminal records prevent many people from getting jobs in the mining sector, which require a general explosives permit (Caron et al., 2019, et al., 2020; MiHR, 2020b). Indigenous people with criminal records may therefore be reluctant to undertake studies because they know that they will have difficulty to find employment afterwards. While many companies are counting on the Indigenous workforce as one of the solutions to the current labour shortage, several issues related to social problems remain:

The bulk of the jobless in our communities today are people with little schooling. It's people who need to change their lifestyle habits. You can't just snap your fingers, but the market wants to have something now. The market would like me to provide an engineer within three months. It would like me to train a nurse in two weeks. The need is there, it's there tomorrow morning. I understand them, but the reality is that the people who can be trained quickly are already trained (...). Even if I send them to work immediately, it's going to be a flop. Why? Because they have different psychosocial needs that make them unable to work right now. So, you must address these concerns before sending them out to work. The mining world is no exception to that. (OHX39)

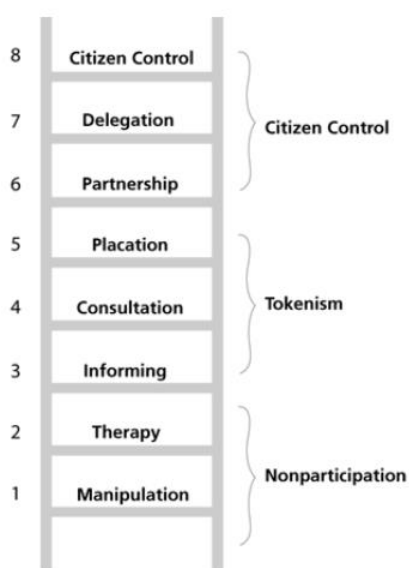
1. Partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations

1.1 Partnerships

In both education and the mining industry, it's important to build lasting relationships with Indigenous communities and increase training opportunities (Caron, 2020; First Nations and Inuit Labour Market Advisory Committee [FNILMAC], 2013; MiHR, 2020b). At all levels of education, meaningful partnerships must be established with Indigenous organizations and communities, while avoiding tokenism or any form of superficiality (Bérard, 2023; Cornellier, 2015; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Gauthier et al., 2015; Jean,

2020; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Jérôme, 2017; Mareschal & Denault, 2020; MiHR, 2020b; RCAAQ, 2020; Ricci, 2015). To this end, partnerships must be rethought by educational institutions to prioritize programs co-created with Indigenous organizations. As shown by Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969), there are several levels of before one achieves a truly equitable partnership.

Figure 2.
Degrees of Citizen Participation (Arnstein, 1969)



To mark out these partnerships, some academic institutions have developed guides for relationships that pertain to protocol between Indigenous authorities and their representatives. For example, Concordia University proposed guidelines when establishing relationships with Indigenous Elders and communities (*Indigenous Elder and Community Protocols*) (Jean, 2020; Concordia University, 2019). Partnerships can take many forms. For example, members of Indigenous communities or organizations can participate in cultural events in schools to educate and raise awareness of Indigenous issues and cultures among staff and students (RCAAQ, 2020).

When post-secondary institutions create programs of study, they must work in collaboration with Indigenous communities to ensure that these programs meet their needs (Bérard, 2023; Atlantic Provinces Community College Consortium [APCCC], 2010; Cornellier, 2015; Jean, 2020; LeBlond & Brown, 2004; Malatest et al., 2004; Mareschal & Denault, 2020; MiHR, 2020b; Ricci, 2015; Savard, 2012):

One thing that's essential when you're promoting or recruiting is to get people involved right from the start. For example, if you want to develop a new program or offer a new service, you need to set up a committee and get people involved right from the start. That way, they're stakeholders in the project. (EFX29)

Content must be accessible and recognized by Indigenous communities and organizations, in a spirit of reciprocity. This step is crucial, as it represents “not only adherence to the training, but also its credibility” (EHX19). That's why we need to consult the community to ensure that our training programs meet the needs of its members:

We encountered a few difficulties with a mining company, where they dictated the training. We integrated our members into a given training program, but it was managed by the vocational training centre, which was in partnership with the mining company. There wasn't necessarily any follow-up. We've corrected that. We said we'd like to be more involved in training development. (OHA40)

The education community must share power with Indigenous education authorities (APCCC, 2010; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Davis, 2000). This type of initiative exists in several Quebec universities and CEGEPS. For example, since 1984, professors from UQAT's Teaching and Research Unit for Educational Sciences have been working in partnership with the Inuit communities of Ivujivik and Puvirnituk in Nunavik to develop the region's educational provision. The programs, which fall within the scope of an Inuit education governance process, are developed through co-management. The success of this partnership is based on a relationship of trust, cultural equality and recognition of the self-determination of the peoples involved (Jean, 2020). Indigenous control of educational programs has been shown to increase admission rates and student retention (APCCC, 2010; Malatest et al., 2004). Some Anicinapek communities that have signed agreements with

mining companies would like to see training partnerships put in place to enable more of their members to get jobs:

We have a mining company that is a signatory with four First Nations [in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region]. Why not take three or four [people] who are interested here, three or four who are interested [in another community] and do something with that? And then, maybe, we'll achieve more of our goals. (OHA40)

Some Abitibi-Témiscamingue mining companies have already set up programs in other Canadian provinces:

In Ontario (...), we had discussions with the communities to find out what training they would like. After that, they talked to Northern College. And now, the training is being given to them. We're on a committee with Indigenous, with Northern College, and we're identifying training to go and work in the mines. (MHX12)

In both the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Côte-Nord regions, vocational training centres and mining companies have emphasized the importance of partnerships with Indigenous organizations, such as the *Regional Adult Education Centres* (RAEC), to help Indigenous students prepare for courses or provide psychosocial support:

We formed a cohort with the Kitci Amik CREA [RAEC]. They prepared them to come here (...). Those who didn't have the prerequisites, they prepared them to take a general development test. (TDG). (EHX23)

In this process, the eight-week student internship [in a mining company], there was a person from CRÉA [Kitci Amik] who helped our students almost full-time. (IFX4)

I think they've already got a whole lot of credibility, and they're well considered in the community. So I believe it's much simpler and more reassuring for people to come and go through this channel. (MFX3)

In the Eeyou Istchee region, partnerships with Indigenous organizations are equally important:

Two training cohorts have been set up on the site with financial assistance from Apatisiwin Skills Development (ASD). This is a department of the Cree Nation with a lot of funds for training, either through the Cree School Board or initiatives that are a little more adapted, more local. So, with this partner, we have set up two training cohorts, one underground and one on the

surface. For the surface cohort, we're working with a Cree partner, Minopro Cree. It's an employee leasing company but focused on training. (MFX11)

This is also the opinion of a mining industry organization that offers training programs in Indigenous communities:

When we deliver the program, it's the training institution that delivers it, but you have to have a partnership with all three: the industry has to be involved, there has to be a training institution, and the Indigenous community or organization has to be involved. (MFX7)

Post-secondary institutions should set up committees to advise program development teams on Indigenous programs or themes (Bérard, 2023; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020). This is why, when creating committees, it is important to ensure process credibility and adequate Indigenous representation:

Sometimes I've seen names where they've created an indigenization committee or reconciliation committees, but when you ask, "Who are the members that take part in it?", there aren't even any Indigenous or there's [just] one Indigenous person on the list. You can't call it that! (EFC21)

There are also committees that bring together Indigenous organizations, mining industry representatives, and training centres to see what types of programs will be needed:

The various committees that I sit through, they've identified the type of programs that they're going to need, especially the ones that are currently in exploration. What they do is that they basically give us a manpower plan. And then, we use that plan and work with the Cree School Board to try to deliver the programs that are going to be needed for individuals so they can access certain positions in the mining sector. (OHC38)

Quebec universities have several Indigenous advisory committees⁷, with varying mandates, statutes, membership, and financial resources. For example, UQAT's First Peoples Advisory Committee (CCPP), which is made up of representatives from Indigenous communities and organizations in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue and Nord-du-Québec regions, is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the university's mission with Indigenous Peoples (Jean, 2020). The CCPP is under the aegis of the *Mamawi*

⁷ Bishop University, Concordia University, Institut national de la recherche scientifique, Université Laval, Université du Québec à Montréal, Université du Québec en Abitibi-Témiscamingue, Université du Québec en Outaouais.

Mikimodan Service (working together), whose role is to help reaffirm and gain recognition for UQAT's leadership in taking Indigenous realities into account. At Concordia University, the Indigenous Directions Leadership Council (IDLC), made up of Indigenous professors, staff, and students, was set up to ensure the deployment of the *Indigenous Directions Action Plan* as well as to support initiatives to develop partnerships with Indigenous communities (Jean, 2020). In the context of these initiatives, it is necessary to ensure that the following objectives are met:

Action plans and institutional plans, there are issues there that concern relations with Indigenous peoples (...). And the CEGEP, I know that at one point it was in their institutional plan, but not much was done. (EFC21)

1.2 Support for Indigenous organizations

Post-secondary institutions must support communities in their various educational ventures and projects (CMEC, 2019; Cunningham & Parker, 1998). They can, for example, support Indigenous communities when they apply to an infrastructure grant program to offer training in the communities. For example, in August 2022, Kiuna Institution, Quebec's only First Nations' post-secondary institution, inaugurated a satellite classroom in the Atikamekw community of Wemotaci, thanks to a contribution from Indigenous Support Fund (Bacon, 2022; Les Cégeps, 2022). Offering programs or courses in the communities allows members to participate in training. For example, as part of *Mining Essentials: Work Readiness Training for Indigenous Peoples*, a program created by the MiHR Council in partnership with the AFN, members of nearby Indigenous communities were hired to take part in training (MiHR, 2023).

2. Resources, services and support

Whether in post-secondary education or in training programs offered by mining companies, there is no single solution to support Indigenous students on their journey. It's the quality, diversity and sustainability of the services on offer that make the difference. The practitioners and professionals who accompany, support, and listen to Indigenous students are determining factors in their pathways (Dufour, 2015; Gauthier et al., 2015; Jonca, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Ratel, 2019). The following section provides an overview of student support services and resources.

2.1 Representation, recognition and spatial planning

Indigenous students do better when they attend places that recognize, integrate, and value Indigenous cultures (AFN, 2010; CCA, 2009; CMEC, 2010; Canada Millennium Scholarship Foundation [CMSF], 2005; Dufour, 2015b; Gauthier et al., 2015; Richards et al., 2008; Timmons, 2009). Access to a cultural space (office or building) for Indigenous students is a key measure, whether in post-secondary education in general or in training specific to the mining industry (AFN, 2010; Bérard, 2023; Bousquet, 2016; Caron, 2020; Caron & Asselin, 2022; Cornellier, 2015; CCA, 2009; Canadian Chamber of Commerce [CCC], 2013; CMSF, 2005; CMEC, 2010; Deschênes, 2022; Dufour, 2015b; FECQ, 2017; Gauthier et al., 2015; Hamel et al., 2022; Holmes, 2006; Hutchings *et al.*, 2019; Institut national des mines [INMQ], 2017; Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017; Lefevre-Radelli, 2019; Legault, 2010; Leyden, et al., 2017; Loiseau & Malatest et al., 2004; O'Bomsawin, 2017; RCAAQ, 2020; Richards et al., 2008; Timmons, 2009; Walton et al., 2020). Indigenous student lounges are a good example of this widespread practice in many CEGEPs, universities and businesses:

If you don't feel well during the day, you stay [in the community], you don't have a ride, you must stay at school, you don't feel well, you're under pressure, you don't want to be there, and your ride home is only coming at 2:00 p.m. (...). It's fun to have a place where people can go to be comfortable and wait for their ride or go and wait for the next class. Sitting and not being afraid of being judged sometimes helps (...). It's quiet, you can go and do your smudge, you can go and do your little traditional prayers or anything to help you get through your day (...). You won't believe how far this can go. (OHA37)

The absence of such a venue explained the low level of social integration of Indigenous students at the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi (UQAC) in 2013 (Joncas, 2013). UQAT and CAT students have been asking for years for a cultural location, such as a tipi/wigwam, on the site of the institution to hold cultural activities (Cornellier, 2015). UQAT recently announced that this project will become a reality.⁸ Several stakeholders in the groups we interviewed mentioned the importance of cultural venues in their organizations. However,

⁸ ICI Radio-Canada, (2023), *L'UQAT veut aller de l'avant avec sa classe extérieure à Val-d'Or [UQAT wants to proceed with its outdoor classroom in Val-d'Or]*, <https://ici.radio-canada.ca/nouvelle/2006100/education-exterieur-universite-abitibi>.

these initiatives must always be carried out in collaboration with Indigenous organizations and students:

There are lots of things in place, but we always go with needs. I'm not the one who decides, "We should have a First Nations show". It's my Indigenization committee that suggests things. There are six Indigenous people on the committee. Everything comes from their needs. I don't decide. (EFX22)

The mining industry, too, stresses the importance of these places:

In the cooperation agreement, we agreed to always maintain a [cultural] site, and we paid the tallyman [to maintain it]. He was an employee, and he looked after it because it's a gathering place. Cree and non-Cree would gather there in the evenings. And that's so rewarding! Because when it comes to work, you know, they [the Eeyouch] come in, they don't have any mining experience, and here they're with miners who've been in the business for 15 to 20 years. Things move very fast (...). At least in the evenings, they had a chance to communicate. There's always the Elders (...), they tell tales, stories, then they laugh, have fun, then they play music and they sing. That was the most profitable element because it brought people together. When they saw each other in the workplace, the ice was broken, the awkwardness was gone. (MHX8)

Although more and more institutions are setting up cultural spaces, it's important to work with Indigenous organizations, communities, and students to find out their opinions and needs in this area:

You must be careful to separate two things: the physical appearance of the site and the site itself. It's all well and good to say, "we're going to set up a teepee by an institution", but if the teepee is put up by the development service, I'm not sure that the meaning for the indigenous student is going to be the same. (GOHX9)

In addition to physical spaces, culturally relevant virtual spaces are needed for distance learners. Care must be taken to provide spaces for the creation of online learning communities to gather and exchange through various digital platforms (Fontaine, 2017; Hanson & Danyluk, 2022; Restoule, 2019). For example, professors have set up discussion circles to enhance the experience of Indigenous students in distance learning courses (Hanson & Danyluk, 2022). Culturally safe spaces allow students to gather, identify, and network. They allow them to feel individually and collectively seen, heard, and recognized by the institution, staff, and non-Indigenous students. It is in this perspective of recognition and reconciliation that more and more institutions are adopting and using a territorial

recognition statement (Bérard, 2023; Bouchard & Riallan, 2021; Jean, 2020). However, it is essential to work in partnership with Indigenous people to ensure that these initiatives are relevant:

The guests who came to talk to us about their vision, all we heard, then with the readings we did, was “There's no point in making a statement if there's no action”. It's all very well to say, “I recognize”, but if that's all there is to it, if that's what reconciliation means to you, then it's not. It's important that there are actions that come with it. (EFC21)

Culturally safe spaces also make it possible to focus the provision of services and support according to educational, socioeconomic and cultural needs (Dufour, 2015b). This model is inspired by initiatives such as the University of British Columbia's First Nations Longhouse, which opened in 1993 and is often cited as the benchmark for Indigenous student support in Canada. The building groups all services for Indigenous students in a culturally appropriate space (Mareschal & Denault, 2020). The Salish-style Longhouse features the Sty-Wet-Tan Great Hall, an Elders' Lounge, the S-Takya daycare centre, a sacred circle, a lounge for students and staff, a computer lab, a kitchen, social and cultural activities, the Xwi7xwa Library, and administrative offices (Holmes, 2006; Malatest et al., 2004). Thus, for culturally appropriate spaces to play their full role, they must be animated, with activities organized to bring together, network, and support Indigenous students within a learning community (Dufour, 2015b; Holmes, 2006; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; RCAAQ, 2020).

Some establishments are multiplying their efforts to value and recognize Indigenous cultures in their building(s). Several organizations exhibit Indigenous art in common areas and ensure the visibility of Indigenous languages in public spaces (Hamel et al., 2022; RCAAQ, 2020). The majority of participants recognized the importance of actions to promote Indigenous cultures:

As soon as you entered the hall, directly to the left, you'd see a big traditional teepee. For students, sometimes it's just a symbol like that. To walk into the school and see it, to know that there's a recognition, a sensitivity to Innu culture, that's reassuring (EHX30).

We made a collective work with students from all nations who came to paint the piece, and [an Indigenous person] was the guest artist. That doesn't just make Indigenous feel good, it makes non-Indigenous feel good, too. (EFX22)

When communicating, say “Kwe”. Some little words. We don't speak the language, but I think we're capable of making an effort and then putting it to good use in invitations, communications, whether it's a few little words from time to time, it makes a difference. (EFX29)

However, vigilance is required when it comes to these initiatives as reported by an Innu parent (quoted by Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022), “Il y a des efforts qui ont été faits. Des fois c'est un peu maladroit dans le sens que... Ils pensent qu'une école, parce qu'ils affichent un capteur de rêves, c'est innu. Tu sais, ce n'est pas ça dans les faits. Mais l'effort est là quand même” [Sometimes things are a little clumsy in the sense that... They think that a school is Innu because there's a dream catcher displayed there. You know, it's not like that in fact, but an effort has still been made]. Some establishments organize cultural activities to promote inclusion (beading circles, National Indigenous Peoples Day, powwows, etc.) (Boutouchent et al., 2019; Dufour, 2019; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017; Walton et al., 2020). Certain institutions occasionally serve traditional food in the cafeteria (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Dufour, 2015b; RCAAQ, 2020):

Some have a native kitchen within the organization to make people feel at ease, for retention, but also for attraction. In Raglan, there's an Inuit kitchen, and they even provide the ingredients for cooking (...). Then it's up to the Indigenous [Inuit] to decide what they need to have in the fridge, in the freezer, and so on. (MFX13)

Some institutions are specifically designed by, for, and with Indigenous people, such as the Kiuna Institution in Quebec (Dufour, 2015b). This model is inspired by projects such as the Tribal Colleges and Universities (TCU) in the United States, the now-defunct Manitou College in Quebec, the First Nations University of Canada (Saskatchewan), Algoma University (Ontario), etc.

2.2 Personalized welcome

Post-secondary institutions may have a personalized welcome process specific to Indigenous students. This welcome enables them, among other things, to learn about available services and resources, network, and strengthen their organizational skills (Dufour, 2015b; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Hamel et al., 2022; Jean, 2020; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017; RCAAQ, 2020, 2022; Vladicka, 2015). It is also a practice implemented in the mining industry, both in training and for the induction of newly hired

employees (Caron, 2020; Caron et al., 2020; Caron & Asselin, 2022; Hutchings et al., 2019; MiHR, 2020). Induction activities can last from one day to one week, depending on the post-secondary institution. Most of the time, these initiatives take place in the fall, and there are many similarities from place to place. A welcoming ceremony (powwow, dance, ceremonial dress, etc.) takes place followed by a word of welcome from management. Students are introduced to training-specific contacts, services, support measures and specific documents.⁹ Indigenous representatives come to talk about their educational backgrounds and life experiences (GOFA7). It's also an opportunity to meet teachers and students admitted in previous years. As part of these activities, a tour of the campus is organized to familiarize students with the premises and show them the services available (Bérard, 2023; FECQ, 2017; Malatest et al., 2004). Cultural activities and games are also offered to break the ice and create bonds and a sense of belonging (Bérard, 2023; Hamel et al., 2022; Jean, 2020).

2.3 Support staff

Many post-secondary institutions have resource persons (support coordinators, project managers, facilitators, social workers, etc.) dedicated to helping Indigenous students integrate into their communities (Alberta Education, 2006; APCCC, 2010; Bérubé, 2015; Cameron & Robinson, 2014; Cornellier, 2015; Dufour, 2015ab; FECQ, 2017; Hutchings et al., 2019; Jean, 2020; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017; Malatest et al. 2004; Ricci, 2015; Vladicka, 2015):

She [the support coordinator] does a lot of liaison work, as I was saying, for students funded [by a band council]. Because communities ask us for assessments. They don't want to pay for a student who isn't there. So, we have to communicate properly about this. And then, often, students need psychosocial follow-up, support, and all that. She makes sure to fine-tune matters for Indigenous students (...). We often have to direct them to services. We have to help them with their personal situation. (EHX27)

⁹ During the welcome, several Canadian universities hand out guides outlining the services available and containing information such as emergency and support numbers; locations of hospitals, clinics, and pharmacies close to the place of study; study tips; support services for success offered on campus (library, daycare, support centre, financial aid, etc.); harassment and discrimination equity policies; a list of social activities and sports clubs; recommendations for restaurants, cafés, and shops close to the establishment; information on student residences; dedicated support for indigenous students (e.g. indigenous initiatives, student association, events, contacts); a detailed map of the campus and university town; etc. (Bérard, 2023).

These resource persons offer a range of personalized services that touch on virtually every facet of student life (application, registration, course selection, health care, housing, daycare, employment, homework help, time management, etc.) (Cornellier, 2015; Dufour, 2019; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020). One participant, who trained at a vocational training centre to work in the mining sector, recalled the importance of resource persons in his journey:

A great percentage of us were able to complete the training because we had a follow-up officer with us all the time. If I had any questions about my monthly benefits, I could call him. If I had a medical appointment, he'd say, "OK. It's okay, I'll talk to your teacher". I felt secure, and then I could put 100% of my energy into my studies (...). For someone who's less at ease, it's always reassuring to have the same supervisor with you throughout the two years of training. (OHA40)

Several participants stressed the importance of these services for Indigenous students throughout their academic career:

They do not want to be set apart. They want to have support they can trust. In some places, they have a very well supervised first year for Indigenous students, but the second year is more difficult because they leave them on their own. They need to follow up with Indigenous students periodically to find out how things are going. If a student doesn't feel like he belongs, he won't necessarily seek help. (OFA33)

This support is essential. It's also about creating a relationship with the students. Because there are some who will come and ask for help, but there are many who won't dare. It's not an environment they're used to. When they arrive at university, it's intimidating for many. (EFX29).

A vocational training centre also stressed the importance of ensuring stability in resource persons and teachers:

Then, they [the people who planned the training] introduced stability. That is to say the way we give courses here, in the regular program with Indigenous, anyone can give any course. For the Indigenous, on the other hand, they've made sure that the same teachers give all the training. (EFX26)

For one participant, "The ideal is to have an Indigenous person (as a resource person). If we can't, we need people who have a very good understanding of the realities of Indigenous students. Where do they come from? What have they experienced? (EFC21). At a CEGEP in the Côte-Nord region, an Indigenous resource person is responsible, among other things, for directing students to the right services:

For three years now, we've hired a First Nations navigator who lives here [in the community]. So, she knows the environment well. Then, she redirects them [Indigenous students] to the right services, whether it's individual pedagogical help, psychological support, difficulties with loans and bursaries or finances, whatever. There's a whole range of services available, and she helps to guide young people in the right direction. (EFX32)

Although the services offered vary from one institution to the next, resources should be available throughout the academic career in connection with social integration, support for success, and psychocultural fulfillment (Dufour, 2015b). For example, in many post-secondary institutions across Canada, “Elders in Residence” are hired to provide support and guidance to Indigenous students and faculty (Bérard, 2023; Cicek et al., 2019; CMEC, 2012; Dufour, 2015b; Hamel et al., 2022; Holmes, 2006; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2004).

Depending on which Indigenous Peoples attend the educational institution, students sometimes have access to bilingual services (Cornellier, 2015; Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021). It is also important to ensure that the quality of services is up to scratch because there is sometimes a discrepancy between the promotional messages of institutions and the reality on the ground (Flynn et al., 2012; Malatest et al. 2002; Savard et al., 2021). In fact, one participant deplored the clientelism of certain training programs aimed at the Indigenous:

They'll say, “We adapted it. What did you adapt? I saw written training, then I compared it with training that had been marked “for Indigenous”. I compared it with general training; all we'd changed were the titles. (...). Where's the adaptation? (...). We asked questions and nobody was able to answer us. It still happens all too often (...). I'd tell you that all this is just to get customers, to get a grant. (OHX39)

For Indigenous students, positive relationships with staff and other students are an important factor in persistence in school (Walton et al., 2020). Nancy Wiscutie-Crépeau, who coordinated UQAT's First Peoples Service, sums up the importance of these services well:

The services offered are to ensure that students have a sense of belonging, that they are familiar with the resources, and then could get involved in projects. [T]he psychosocial and the pedagogical are really [also] two pillars of success. Especially for students who come from the communities because, often, when they arrive here, they don't have the support network, they don't know the other students, whom they meet during Welcome Week. (...) Often, when we're in a university, we're interested in the student's performance. But we're not necessarily interested

in the emotional, psychosocial aspect of the person. In our approach, we really want to work on the four dimensions of the person—physical, mental, spiritual and emotional—because we know that this balance is important for the student and his or her accompanying family. (quoted from Lefevre-Radelli & Laurent, 2017, p. 28).

According to many participants, it is necessary for training institutions to have a dedicated service for First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people:

It doesn't work to apply the same thing to everyone, to all the different groups [in an educational institution]. There must be a specific service for Indigenous students (...). It takes someone to think about that, to see what obstacles Indigenous students face from admission to graduation. (EFC21)

It is important to guarantee the continuity of services for Indigenous students. For example, UQAT abolished positions in the First Peoples Service as part of the cuts brought about by the budget austerity imposed by Philippe Couillard's Liberal government in the mid-2010s, which led to repercussions on the ability to meet students' needs. The situation has since recovered, notably with the adoption of the *UQAT and Indigenous Peoples - Action Plan* in 2019, which led to the creation of the *Mamawi Mikimodan* Service. In 2017, following cuts to CAT's First Nations Service, there was a lack of interveners dedicated to accompanying Indigenous students, and only one person served all campuses (FECQ, 2017). In addition to offering sustainable services, we need to ensure that they are visible, accessible, and well communicated to Indigenous students to maximize their use (Joncas, 2013; Timmons, 2009). These issues were also raised in interviews and focus groups:

With all the services [for First Nations] that we had, suddenly we're no longer funded, so we don't provide services at all. Then, three or four years later, after removing those services, we see a drop in the number of clients in the college centre. That's when we reintroduce ourselves to the Indigenous population, and then we apply again because all Indigenous funding applications, when they're well put together, are often accepted. (OHX39)

Information and training workshops related to the “student's job” provide students with better tools for their academic path. The topics covered in these workshops can vary according to need: stress management, time management, literacy and writing, oral presentations, documentary research, team and individual work, reading scientific articles, plagiarism prevention, use of computer tools, mental health, well-being, etc. (Bérard, 2023; Caron, 2020; Caron & Asselin, 2022; Cunningham & Parker, 1998; Jean, 2020; Malatest et al., 2004; Manning et al., 2018; MiHR, 2020b; Pearson et al., 2015). These workshops

may be available in several formats (in person, podcasts, video capsules, etc.) (Bérubé, 2015; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020; Joncas, 2013; Savard et al., 2021; Vladicka, 2015).

Several organizations have highlighted the need to put in place various resources to support students:

[We have a resource] who comes in to give individualized help to our students so that they can learn to organize themselves academically to simplify it all. How do you organize your schedule? How do you organize your notes? How do you organize your work? (EHX28)

Indigenous students also need support when they return to school:

In the beginning, whether it was computers, etc., I put in hours that I wouldn't normally have done for a non-native cohort. The Indigenous cohorts needed support with computerized equipment, time management, everything that goes with being a student. How to study? How to prepare for exams? How to budget? (EFX29)

To assess needs and properly communicate services, the majority of Canadian universities use a voluntary, confidential self-identification form to identify students' Indigenous identity (Bérard, 2023; FECQ, 2017; RCAAQ, 2022). This allows post-secondary institutions to offer the appropriate support services and devote the necessary resources. It is essential to remember the importance of being rigorous in this practice because in recent years several allegations of identity fraud have been listed in academic institutions. That's why we need to make sure that the people who benefit from these programs are those for whom they were designed (Bérard, 2023).

Many post-secondary institutions offer preparatory programs and courses in anticipation of admission to training. Given the diversity of educational backgrounds among Indigenous people, these courses enable students to prepare adequately for the requirements of the post-secondary programs in which they plan to study (Bérubé, 2015; CMEC, 2012; Cornellier, 2015; Dufour, 2015; FNILMAC, 2013; Joncas, 2013; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2002; RCAAQ, 2022; Ricci, 2015). For example, UQAT offered the university preparatory program between 2009 and 2012 (Savard et al., 2021). and CAT offered college preparatory courses for the Indigenous.¹⁰ The “Kwe l'Université!” portal¹¹,

¹⁰ Cégep A-T. *Tremplin DEC Premières Nations*. (s.d.). <https://www.cegepat.qc.ca/tremplin-dec-autochtones/>

¹¹ Université TÉLUQ. (2017). *Kwe l'université! le portail qui vous accompagne dans votre projet d'études universitaires – à venir en 2024!* <https://kwe-universite.teluq.ca/>

developed jointly by TÉLUQ, UQAT, and UQAC, will soon offer online or “in a box” training modules (which do not require Internet access) to prepare Indigenous students who wish to enter a university program.

Activities also exist in the form of support groups that address various aspects of the academic, personal, family, or community spheres (Cornellier, 2015; Holmes, 2006; RCAAQ, 2022). Different psychosocial support strategies are offered depending on the facility, which include sharing and discussion circles, women's groups and recurring cultural activities (Jean, 2020). These cultural activities are greatly appreciated by Indigenous students:

In our schools, whether secondary, primary, or our vocational training centre, there are Innu language courses (...). We also have cultural workshops. For example, I currently have a group of 11 Innu youths who have gone into the woods for a week with a counsellor and a teacher (...). We have a *shaputuan* (traditional gathering place) next to the school where we can hold activities. So there are some Elders who come to the school as soon as there's an event, and it always starts with a prayer, and there's always sharing. (OFX42)

These initiatives also exist in the mining sector in Canada and Australia (Hutchings et al., 2019; MiHR, 2020; CBC, 2020b; Trudgett, 2009; 2013):

Once a month (...), employees bring in bannock or cook moose. It's a tasting with all the employees, then they exchange ideas, we communicate, we ask each other questions. Cultural days like this are a real winner and don't cost that much. We don't waste so much time either. Three hours once a month isn't too much to ask. This has repercussions on the work climate, on the training climate, you could say in this case. That's the winning aspect. You have to look for every opportunity to create proximity. (OHA40)

Ideally, some of these resources should be accessible on an individual basis. For example, a language service since English or French is not the mother tongue of many Indigenous people (Bérard, 2023; Hamel et al., 2022; Jean, 2020).

Support staff who offer guidance services before, during, and after graduation are needed so that Indigenous students can access their desired careers (APCCC, 2010; CCC, 2013; CMEC, 2012; Holmes, 2006; Hutchings et al., 2019; Malatest et al., 2004; Russel, 2013). In addition to being culturally competent, resource persons need to be knowledgeable about career opportunities based on students' aspirations (Vladicka, 2015). Some communities have developed their own resources and programs to guide Indigenous students:

If an individual doesn't have any necessary skills required in order to obtain the set position at the mine, the employment counselors then refer them (...). This is what you're going to need. Initially you need to follow a vocational course at the application schools here in the Cree communities. (OHC38)

An organization of the Cree Nation Government also offers help in finding a job when a student completes training:

We [ask the students] to tell us what field of studies they're currently in. And based on that information that we have, we already have a potential pool of workers that can jump right away to the field once they're done their studies (...). It's fairly new, and the intention there is to act as a bridge from studies. So, we basically connect the students to employers so they can obtain employment right from the get-go from when they finish their studies. (OHC38)

However, this service is not available in all Indigenous communities or educational institutions. One participant pointed out that it would be important to follow up after training to ensure the integration of workers into the workforce, but that lack of staff and funding makes this difficult:

Of course, after [the training], some of them come back to us, but we don't do systematic follow-up. We don't have the resources to do it. To ensure the school-to-work transition, to support them, take them by the hand and accompany them (...). I think it would be a win-win situation. (EFX25)

2.4 Mentoring and tutoring

To complement the services offered by post-secondary institutions, we recommend setting up a tutoring and mentoring system. This type of accompaniment is widespread in post-secondary institutions. It is a determining factor in student success in a multitude of programs (APCCC, 2010; CMEC, 2012; Deschênes, 2022; Dufour, 2015b; Gauthier et al., 2015; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Hamel et al., 2022; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020; Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021; Leyden, et al., 2017; Malatest et al., 2004; National Aboriginal Health Organization [NAHO], 2008; RCAAQ, 2020; Rodon, 2008; University of Queensland, 2010). Indigenous mentors, who are further along in their education, provide academic and social support and guidance to promote success, well-being, and inclusion (Bérard, 2023). Mentoring/tutoring lie within a learning process directed towards educational principles and objectives that complement those offered by professionals (Dufour, 2015b; Jean, 2020; Duchesne & Larose, 2000). There are several examples of this practice in Canadian

universities where Indigenous students support each other according to their fields of study (Bérard, 2023; Jean, 2020). The absence of Indigenous role models and mentors in the educational institution can be detrimental to learning (Anonson et al., 2008; Dufour & Bousquet, 2016; Malatest et al., 2002; Savard et al., 2021). Forms of mentoring may vary. For example, there are mentoring programs where students are meshed with graduates who encourage and support them as they pursue their studies. Outside class hours, the volunteer or mandated person helps students on a regular, one-to-one basis with their academic progress. Although the nature of the support can vary from person to person, this service might take the form of methodological support (time management), social support (building a social network), emotional support (family support), and vocational support (help with career choices) (CMEC, 2012; Dufour, 2015b; Duchesne & Larose, 2000). This practice is common at all post-secondary levels. For example, a participant from a vocational training centre mentioned:

We have a student on the verge of graduation who has come to accompany one of her former colleagues who needs more time to finish his training. It acts as an internship, and it's a real help to our teaching team (...). They were together for four weeks. The kid really enjoyed this! (EHX28)

The same type of initiative is also in place at a CEGEP in the Côte-Nord region:

We have a peer-tutoring project. These are students who help other students in a particular course, but it's at the students' request. So, if a teacher sees that one of his students is having difficulties, he or she will refer that student to the peer-tutoring team, and he or she will be paired up with an academically stronger student (...). This year, of the sixty or so students who took advantage of this service, perhaps 15 or 20 were First Nations students. I was very and positively surprised (...) because usually our First Nations students are very shy. (...) I went wow! It's a really great project! It seems to be working because it's also becoming a source of motivation for them. (EFX32)

Mentoring is also recognized as good practice in the mining industry. New employees are accompanied by more experienced employees in the performance of their tasks. Mentoring contributes to establishing good relations between management and employees as well as to the general atmosphere at work (Haley & Fisher, 2014; Sadri & Tran, 2002; Sammartino et al., 2003). As in education, it is suggested that mentors be Indigenous or at least sensitive

to First Nations, Inuit, and Métis realities and issues (Ewing et al., 2017). Coaching can also go beyond the specific framework of the work environment. Sometimes mentors are called upon to provide support in many aspects of personal, family, or community life (Burgess & Dyer, 2009).

2.5 Accommodation, transportation and daycare

In many educational institutions, residences are available for Indigenous students (CMEC, 2012; FNILMAC, 2013; Holmes, 2006; RCAAQ, 2020; Vladicka, 2015). However, there is a gap to be filled in many places in Quebec (FECQ, 2017). In addition, the availability of family apartments for Indigenous students with children is rare in Quebec (Dufour, 2015b). A school organization representative explained:

We are currently building the Nutshimit living environment with the Société immobilière du Regroupement des centres d'amitié autochtones du Québec. (...), some housing, some apartments dedicated to students and their families with a central community space where there's a CPE in there and some community kitchens. There are all kinds [of services] (...). We have a few studios, one bedrooms, two bedrooms, three bedrooms, and four bedrooms to accommodate larger families (...). Speaking of recruitment and retention measures, one obstacle our First Nations students had was this. They couldn't find housing in the city. (EHX30)

If there is no room in a residence or if housing is not suitable for the student's family situation, some institutions help to find an apartment (Bérard, 2023; CMEC, 2012; Dufour & Bousquet, 2016; FNILMAC, 2013; Joncas, 2018; Vladicka, 2015; Walton et al., 2020). This is a measure appreciated by several Indigenous participants: “Some places, they really take care of them. They even help them find an apartment” (OFA33). This practice is also present in the mining industry (Caron, 2020; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Manning et al., 2018). What's more, in urban areas, native friendship centres also offer certain services (RCAAQ, 2020).

The distance between Indigenous communities and post-secondary institutions can sometimes complicate travel. Not all students have access to a car to get around, and transportation options are limited, especially in regions far from urban areas. In response to this challenge, some educational institutions have set up transportation services between communities and teaching sites (Cazin, 2005; Cornellier, 2015; CMEC, 2012; FECQ, 2017). In Val-d'Or for example, the CAT and UQAT offered a shuttle service to the Anicinape community of Lac-Simon, located some 30 km away. (FECQ, 2017).

One of the reasons Indigenous students drop out of school is often familial responsibility (Benoît, 2004; Rodon, 2008; Walton et al., 2020). This is why the family situation must be considered when setting up services and training (Alberta Education, 2006; Cazin, 2005; Walton et al., 2020). To improve family-work-study balance, on-campus or nearby accessible daycare during class hours should be available (APCCC, 2010; Cazin, 2005; CMEC, 2012; Cornellier, 2015; FECQ, 2017; Hamel et al., 2022; Holmes, 2006; RCAAQ, 2020). One Anicinape participant mentioned appreciation of this measure when members of his community train in neighboring towns: “At the school where they train in New Liskeard, there's a place where there's a daycare. Students can leave their babies at the daycare and they go to the training” (OHA37). For Indigenous communities close to their places of study, one cannot take for granted that these services are available. In many spots in Quebec, there is a shortage of places in schools and early childhood centres (CPEs) due to population growth and underfunded infrastructure. In addition, teacher and daycare technician positions in communities are hard to fill (FECQ, 2017). If there is no daycare available on campus, many post-secondary institutions rely on resource persons to help students find a place (Dufour, 2015b).

2.6 Policies against harassment, racism and discrimination

The institution of policies to combat racism, harassment, discrimination and violence of a sexual nature (VACS) as well as front-line services are necessary (Bérard, 2023; Caron & Asselin, 2022; FNILMAC, 2013; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Hamel et al., 2022; Jean, 2020; Miller, 2005; Hutchings et al., 2019). For example, some institutions deploy prevention activities as well as intervention methods during problematic situations for the student community as well as staff (Hamel et al., 2022). The majority of post-secondary institutions offer free online training for staff and students. The position of women in the mining industry and discrimination in non-traditional jobs must also be addressed (Cox & Mill, 2015; Deonandan et al., 2016; FNHRDCQ, 2019). Most Indigenous people who attend post-secondary institutions are women. And yet, in Canada in 2016, Indigenous and non-Indigenous women accounted for just 16% of the mining industry workforce, compared with 48% in all other industries combined. The great majority of positions that they hold are related to administration and human resources (Baruah & Biskupski-Mujanovic, 2021; MiHR, 2020d). Studies have attributed the low retention rates of women in the mining industry to the sexism and sexual harassment present in work environments, particularly in remote camps (Baruah & Biskupski-Mujanovic, 2021; Cox & Mill, 2015; Deonandan et al., 2016; Parmenter & Drummond, 2022). Indigenous women are exposed to both racism and sexism (Nightingale et al., 2017; Parmenter & Drummond, 2022). An Eeyou participant explained:

You have places where it's very closed. An Indigenous person who experiences harassment may seem like a small thing sometimes, but when you've been going through it for two, three, four, five, or six years, it becomes harassment (...). An Indigenous woman who works for a mining company and is always called Pocahontas on her team, for example (...). You add up all the situations that happen. They call them micro-aggressions. When I used to give training courses [in the mines], you'd see the guys' faces like "OK!". They realized they had to be careful. Yes, sometimes they're jokes, but all the time at some point... (EFC21)

The same participant also stressed the importance of having the right complaint mechanisms in place to support these people since this can create difficult situations for complainants:

The problem is that people don't talk either (...) because it's extremely difficult. From the moment you make a complaint, it's a lot of stress (...). You have Indigenous people who won't talk. Sometimes they don't know what to do or who to talk to. Also, if you do something, you're seen by others as a [snitch]. (EFC21)

During focus groups, the need to establish “a complaint mechanism with the institution, follow-up within predetermined timescales and [access to] several levels to resolve the complaint” was also raised (GMFX2).

3. Staff training

One of the pillars of cultural safety in post-secondary education is to train management and all staff members adequately in order to raise their awareness of the cultures, issues, realities, and concerns of Indigenous students and to develop, among other things, their cultural competencies (Asselin & Drainville, 2020; Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Caron & Asselin, 2022; Cazin, 2005; Crawley & Sinclair, 2003; Djédjé, 2016; Dufour, 2015; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Future Skills, 2022; Gélinas-Proulx, 2014; Holmes, 2006; Hutchings et al., 2019; Jean, 2020; Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021; Lefevre-Radelli, 2017; Malatest et al., 2004; Mareschal & Denault, 2020; Parmenter & Trigger, 2018; Parmenter & Barnes, 2021; RCAAQ, 2020; Rodon, 2008; Vanguers, 2021). The relevance of understanding Indigenous realities and cultures was emphasized several times during the interviews, notably through the example of funerals:

Indigenous people have strong family values. Whether he's my uncle by marriage, if I've been with him all my life, he's my uncle to me. You won't see me [at work] if he dies. You won't see me for five days because [funerals] take a long time in these communities. So an employer who says, “In our policy, you're only entitled to one day for a funeral,” well, you're going to lose him [the employee]. He's going to leave. (OFA35)

UQAT's Continuing Education Service offers courses *Piwaseha* and *Wedokodadowiin* free of charge to employees and students (Jean, 2020). These courses deal with the cultures, realities and ways of working with Indigenous people. With the help of this type of training, staff are better equipped to understand students who attend the educational institution:

Teachers need to be sensitized to Indigenous cultures, in particular a sense of humor. Teachers shouldn't see humor in the classroom as disrespect. It's the way to learn, it's part of the culture, of teaching. (GOFA7)

In the mining industry, several companies have chosen to make this type of training mandatory. One participant mentioned that “[here with us] it's mandatory (...) for all employees to take the *Seasons of the Peoples* training. To date, we have 76% of our employees trained in Cree culture and in their reality” (MFX11). It is also prescribed that these training courses be taken regularly by staff because their effect diminishes over time (EHX19).

It is recommended for teachers that more advanced training be provided on the history of Indigenous Peoples in Quebec and the trauma and violence that result from racist and colonialist policies in order to support them in decolonizing their practices (Archambault, 2010; Bérubé & Cornellier, 2016; CMEC, 2019; Cornellier, 2015; Gauthier et al, 2015; Jean, 2020; Maheux & Gauthier, 2013; Malatest et al., 2004; Savard et al., 2021; Shield, 2005; CBC, 2020b; Timmons, 2009; Wallace, 2018). These initiatives should be integrated into university training programs for future professors (CMEC, 2019). Several universities are already making video capsules available to professors to inform them about the realities of Indigenous students (Jean, 2020). In the Côte-Nord region, one CEGEP organizes pedagogical days about Indigenous students in partnership with an Indigenous organization and highlighted the importance of going a step further:

In 2018 or 2019, I organized a professional development day. The Tshakapesh Institute had come to present the profile of native learners, how they behave. To be able to understand why they don't talk in class. What their learning style is and all that. Teachers were very attentive and very happy to have heard Tshakapesh speak. The problem I have is that they've heard that, and they think they're right (...). “We know it, she told us so, she explained it to us”. Yeah, but how do you develop it? How do we go further? That's what we need to work on. (EFX32)

In this sense, institutions also need to support teachers in the inclusion of Indigenous perspectives in their courses:

The job is to educate, to raise awareness among teachers and lecturers. How do you integrate Indigenous perspectives if you don't have any foundations? Where can you do this? There certainly are courses where it's difficult, but maybe it can be done in some courses. I don't know, in a literature or French course, if you can introduce Indigenous authors. You must help people do that. (EFC21)

Teachers should also have access to mentoring or one-on-one counselling about cultural differences and the development of culturally relevant pedagogical strategies (Bérubé,

2015; Gauthier et al., 2015; Jean, 2020). In one CEGEP in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, an educational community was created to discuss about best practices in teaching in an Indigenous context and support of Indigenous students (GÉFX4). At a CEGEP in the Côte-Nord region, an Innu educational consultant was hired, among other things, to provide support to staff:

[The] educational consultant, she supports teachers in course development when they want to further elaborate the cultural safety component or adapt their teaching to the presence of First Nations students in courses. The First Nations navigator ensures direct contact with the students, who can speak to her in Innu-aimun, in their mother tongue, to try and understand what's going wrong and what's going right (...). So, a teacher who would like to add or adjust certain content to take Indigenous realities into account can come and meet our educational advisor/service navigator to get some inspiration:; talk a bit about how things are going; be able to adapt; find good works, good references: or the right way to talk about different issues that are experienced or that may be experienced by Indigenous populations (EFX32)

Finally, intervention guides for the success of Indigenous students should be elaborated following the example of the INMQ guide (2023) or the Cégep de Baie-Comeau guide, produced in collaboration with the Innu community of Pessamit (Cégep de Baie-Comeau, 2014; O'Bomsawin, 2017). This guide contains, among other things, documentation to better understand the situation of Indigenous students, strategies to foster their educational success, and bibliographical references in pedagogy (Cégep de Baie-Comeau, 2014). Some participants pointed out the lack of resources in these regards at certain institutions:

My workplace doesn't provide me with any tools for this (...). I think it would be great if we could create pedagogical tools for teachers who are going to teach. Surely those who teach in secondary or elementary school may already have these tools. For others who give *ad hoc* [courses] like me, it would be nice. (EHX31)

4. School curriculum

Respectfully including Indigenous knowledge, values, and teaching practices in post-secondary courses increases the academic persistence of Indigenous students (Borak, 2023; Embleton, 2012; Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021; Ragoonaden & Mueller, 2017). However, we must ensure that we use an approach that considers the cultural diversity, history, and geography of Indigenous people in Canada. The success of a program in one community does not necessarily guarantee the same results in another (MiHR, 2020b).

4.1 Pedagogical approaches and inclusion of Indigenous perspectives and approaches

Given the existence of different learning modes according to cultures (Rodon, 2008; Smith-Mohamed, 1998; Wright, 1998), appropriate pedagogical approaches must be used. For example, integrating native cultures into the course (themes, examples, and assignments, etc.), adopting a “linguistic empathy” (notably by reducing word flow and being more permissive about assignment deadlines), allowing time to think about the questions asked, forging bonds of trust, making room for individual interventions during breaks or after class, and adding visual material (Blanchet-Cohen et al., 2022; Cornellier, 2015; Deschênes, 2021; Gauthier et al., 2015; Guenther et al., 2017; Hamel et al., 2022; RCAAQ, 2020; Santerre, 2014). Several of these approaches were mentioned during the interviews.

Sensitivity to the fact that French isn't their first language. Sometimes they don't understand, maybe it's because they haven't understood the language, one needs to speak more slowly. All these little things can make a difference. (EFX29)

He [the teacher] knew that when you say to someone, “Think about this, then give me your answer”. Well, there's a time lag (...). We often expect an instant response, “You told us, think about it. I'm thinking about it”. Oh, right! That's right! I said to think about it (...). You often must go and ask them questions. Because they won't ask many questions. The teacher must be proactive to question them. (EHX23)

If the young person must think in Innu and then translate it, it takes much longer than if I think in French and then write it down. So, you must have that kind of openness. And unfortunately, right now, it's very difficult for our young people to have that kind of openness at the post-secondary level. (OFX42)

The relationship with teachers was also repeatedly highlighted as a key element in the perseverance of the Indigenous:

This guy really has a knack for listening, understanding, and integrating learner feedback to make each cohort better. He also takes the learner's personal life into account. Because it's tough, they go off to work 14 days, 12 hours a day, so it must become like a little family. He puts a lot of emphasis on culture. (MFX11)

The teachers were interested in the students' culture. They practically ate with their families. It really was in a community setting. The teachers came by every morning to pick up the students with their packed lunches. (EFX25)

Appropriate pedagogical approaches can also be included by inviting guest speakers as well as Indigenous Elders into courses (Barber & King, 2017; Bérard, 2023; Blanchet, 2021; CBC, 2020b; Cornellier, 2015; Jean, 2020; Jin, 2021, Walton et al., 2020). Some training programs require the participation of seniors in their preparation for the mining sector:

They won't teach the class, but it's mandatory to have an Elder involved in the program. To come on Monday morning and open the program with a prayer, a song, or a story. We're always more successful when we give a program and an Elder is involved than when they're not. We had one cohort that didn't have an Elder, and then it didn't work (...). So, when they're in the classroom, you can see that there's a change in their behavior. (MFX7)

A holistic, culturally sensitive and relationship-centred approach is recommended when teaching in an Indigenous context (Alberta Education, 2006; Battiste, 2002; Battiste, 2013; CBC, 2020b; CCA, 2007; Colomb, 2012; Cornellier, 2015; FNHRDCQ, 2019; Demers, 2010; Gauthier et al., 2015; INMQ, 2017; MiHR, 2020b; RCAAQ, 2022). This type of learning appeals to and develops all facets of the person: emotional, physical, spiritual, and intellectual. It focuses on relationships with family, community, language, culture, people, and the world around them. Personal responsibilities are seen in terms of contribution to the community (CCL, 2007). The Canadian Council on Learning (CCL, 2007) has outlined the First Nations holistic model of lifelong learning (Figure 2). The first circle, on the left, identifies the main characteristics of learning: sources and domains of knowledge (the roots), personal development (the branches) and collective well-being (the foliage). The second circle corresponds to the seven learning rings and the four dimensions of personal development (spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental) that are represented in the centre (CCA, 2007). This model also presents the Indigenous conception of success. Success is not specifically linked to obtaining a diploma or a grade but rather to the effort put in and the importance of the skills developed (particularly in terms of serving the community). Contrary to the Western conception of education, “failing school does not mean failing life” (Gauthier et al., 2015).

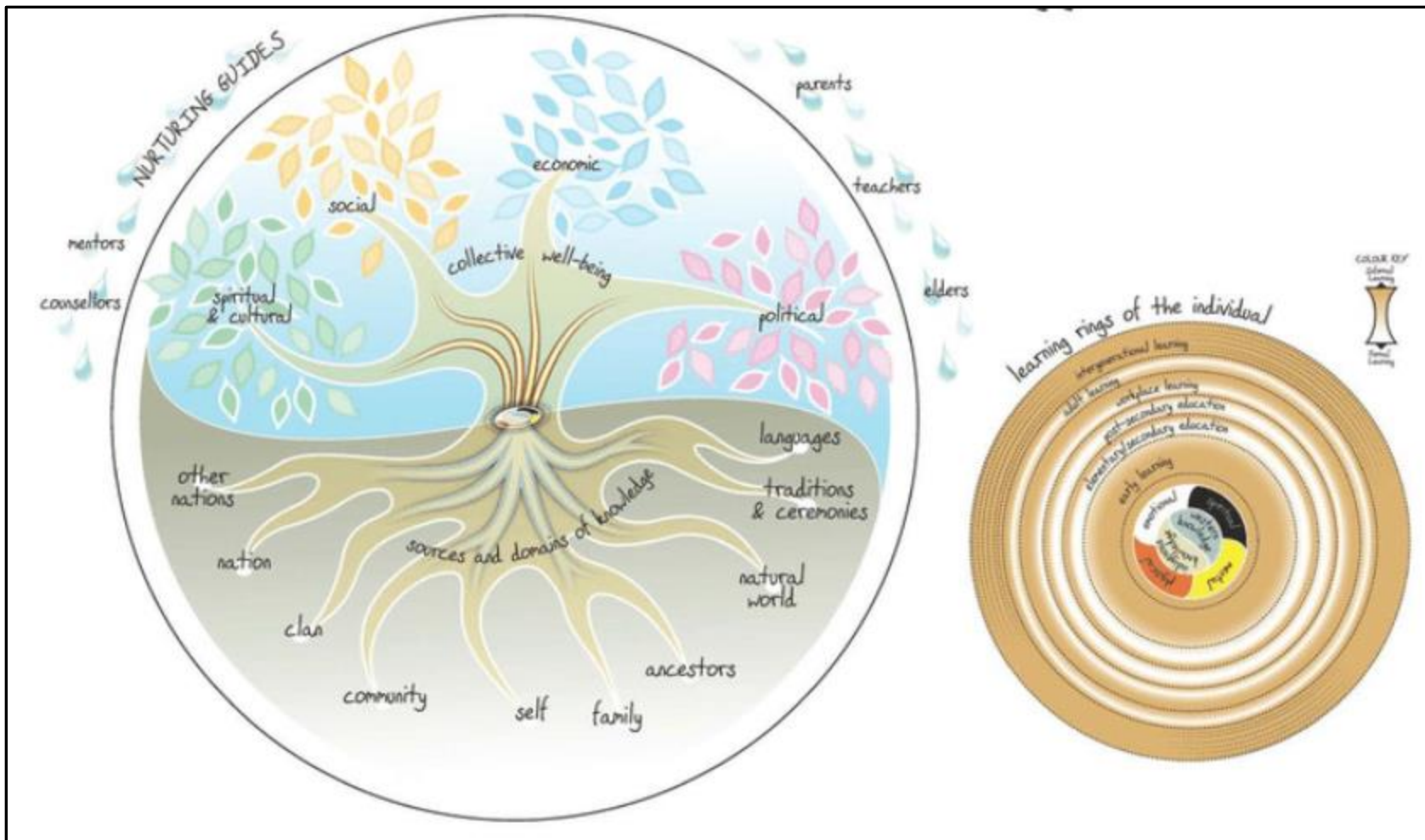


Figure 2. First Nations Holistic Lifelong Learning Model (CCA, 2007).

One of the first steps in the decolonization of education is to make teachers aware of the influence of colonialism and the imperialism of knowledge in curricula (Battiste, 2002; Battiste, 2013). This is why teachers are invited to value and promote the knowledge, worldview, culture, and history of Indigenous Peoples, to move away from a Eurocentric model of education (Battiste, 2002; Cote-Meek, 2014; De Canck, 2008; FNEC, 2020; Wiscutie-Crépeau, 2021). To do so, it is important to provide teachers with the tools to integrate Indigenous content into courses to increase the cultural relevance of training courses (Alberta Education, 2006; Battiste & McLean, 2005; Beresford & Partington, 2003; Bérard, 2023; Castagno & Brayboy, 2008; Cornellier, 2015; Gauthier et al., 2015; Hare & Pidgeon, 2011; Jean, 2020; Kirkness & Barnhardt, 2001; Klug & Whitfield, 2003; Kristoff & Cottrell, 2021; Maheux & Gauthier, 2013). For example, the Faculty of Engineering at the University of Wollongong in Australia has created the *Beginners Guide to Incorporating Aboriginal Perspectives into Engineering Curricula*. The guide presents brief examples of Indigenous engineering prior to European colonization (canoe building, agriculture, irrigation, mining, etc.). It emphasizes the omnipresence of scientific knowledge in education to the detriment of Indigenous knowledge. For example, the aqueduct systems built by the Romans are often presented in courses while the constructions of the Gunditjmarra, an Australian Indigenous People, are rarely mentioned even though they developed similar technologies long before the Romans (Cicek et al., 2019; Kennedy et al., 2016). A few participants gave examples of Indigenous content related to mining training. For example, in “the [mineral technology] courses, where they talk about claims and all that, they’ll talk a bit about Nitassinan, and then the relationship with First Nations territory” (EHX30). Another participant shared a fact he used in his geology classes:

One of the things I like to say when explaining geology and mining is that the Indigenous were the first prospectors on the land. Because they used stone tools and not just any stone. There was already a culture of development to find the right stone, so exploiting quarry sites and things like that (...). Remember that historically, that was part of their culture, too. (EHX31)

However, this content is not distributed uniformly across all programs within a single post-secondary institution:

We do it in the context of certain programs. Yes, some do, but it's really more in the context of personal pedagogical approaches, not necessarily in the content of the course. It's more in the approach, in the way it's delivered, in the follow-up we give the student (...). And then, for some, it depends on the teacher, so it's quite hybrid. (EHX30)

An Eeyou participant evoked the importance of adding Indigenous content to engage Indigenous students in courses:

From my experience, when I was in high school, that wasn't necessarily the case, but I had that one teacher that taught me history classes when I was in high school, and I loved it. He basically had Indigenous content within his curriculum. It wasn't about the discovery of America and stuff like that. It was basically a history of colonialism and all of that. Information from all that history that Indigenous people had to encounter (...). So, I think it's important to have that within the curriculum. I think the trainer should have that type of training when they come into the communities. (OHC38)

The aim of the exercise is not just to integrate Indigenous content into programs in a superficial way, but to teach the foundations of colonialism and its consequences. Thus, this content should not be added without critical analysis (Kermoal & Gareau, 2019). Regardless of the discipline chosen, Indigenous students are particularly interested in cultural, identity, and historical issues (Dufour, 2015ab; FECQ, 2017; Holmes, 2006; Joncas, 2013; MiHR, 2020b). Mining-related training is no exception:

One important thing is always to be committed to culture and tradition. Except that not all places take that into account. (...) There's a place in Ontario they call *Keepers of the Circle*. They do mine training, but it's a little longer than the ore extraction training (...) because they spend the first half of the year on the cultural plane. (OHA37)

I think there should be a cultural component. You know, something that recognizes Indigenous people. Their history, their language, their process. I think that's such an important component to their intellectual educational development, right? That way, it gives them a perspective (...) I think there has to be a sort of a preparatory cultural, not just from an Indigenous aspect of it, but also what being in the private sector means compared to working in the community and vice versa. Those kinds of things, what's the expectation? Because I think a lot of times, this was a learning curve that I learned because a lot of people would work in the band or in the community, like, being late for five minutes, it wasn't a big deal in the community, but it is a big deal when you're working at the mine. (OHC41)

They also request that their cultures be presented in courses to reduce prejudice and become better known to their peers (Gauthier et al., 2015). This is also asked for by non-Indigenous students, who note that history courses deal little with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis (FECQ, 2017). Courses related to Indigenous history, cultures, and realities are offered in several university training programs (nursing, medicine, engineering, teaching, etc.) (Baba, 2013; Boutouchent et al., 2019; Caron & Asselin, 2022; Dufour 2015b; Goldfinch & Kennedy, 2013; Kermoal & Garneau, 2019; MiHR, 2023; Wallace, 2018) as well as in mining industry training programs (Caron & Asselin, 2020; McCreary, 2013ab; MiHR, 2020b).

It is difficult for students to succeed when their culture is nonexistent from course content or the workplace (Jean, 2020; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; McCreary, 2013ab; MiHR, 2020b; St-Pierre, 2021). Thus, Inuit and Métis communities criticize mining industry training courses for not reflecting their cultures in their pedagogical approaches (MiHR, 2020b). Therefore, in addition to including Indigenous perspectives in training, course content must be shaped to Indigenous realities (Dufour, 2018b) and reflect the diversity of Indigenous cultures (Deschênes, 2021). For example, a management course should put forward Indigenous approaches that will apply to specific community contexts (Deschênes, 2021). The majority of post-secondary training programs do not consider the fact that some Indigenous students will be working in their communities once they have completed their academic paths (Malatest et al., 2004). In this sense, students want to be equipped to face the realities of their communities (Lefevre-Radelli, 2017; RCAAQ, 2020). For example, at the Cégep de Sept-Îles, the first two courses in the compulsory philosophy sequence are designed with Indigenous students' culture and learning styles in mind. They learn to think and argue without necessarily going through the classical Western philosophers. In the first course, students conduct research and use elements of conceptual analysis to develop their thinking on the history and current situation of Indigenous communities. The second course allows them to deepen their reflection on the perspectives available to communities in contemporary societies (Mareschal & Denault, 2020). The need to tailor courses to Indigenous realities was mentioned several times during the interviews:

We got someone from the Cree Health Board to do this module [of the training]. We wanted to give the practices of the community and in Cree culture to make sure there were no value judgments. (EFX25)

When I was teaching early childhood education, there were special education courses where we put together intervention plans. I really clung to what intervention plans were in the community, otherwise they didn't appeal to them. We role-played. Quite often, I started from situations that the students conveyed to me (...). We often started from real situations that were happening in their community because if you start from situations that are happening in our lives, as non-Indigenous people, and then it doesn't reflect reality at all, well, you're less likely to interest them. (EFX29)

It is also important for Indigenous people to be represented in all trades and decision-making bodies in universities and colleges. In this way, Indigenous realities are better taken into account in programs and services (APCCC, 2010; Bérard, 2023; Blanchet, 2021; Dufour, 2015b; FECQ, 2017; Holmes, 2006; Hutchings et al., 2019; Jean, 2020; Lefevre-Radelli & Jérôme, 2017; Malatest et al., 2004; Mareschal & Denault, 2020; Rodon, 2008; CBC, 2020b). A mining sector organization which provides training in Indigenous communities mentioned that, as part of their training, they “try to have two trainers, one of whom comes from the community as such, who is Indigenous. For example, in our next training session, we have one of our trainers, who has already taught the program twice, who comes [from an Eeyou community]” (MHX1). In addition to having Indigenous teachers, it is necessary to have the support of the community where the training is given.

Community support is important because sometimes there wasn't any, and I could see the difference (...). It could be an Elder, it could be someone from the community who they trust who comes to observe. For example, sometimes I had students and I hadn't seen them for a few days. Well, this person would try to reach them or knew what had happened in the community. It was very helpful because we're not experiencing the reality of the community. We're in our classroom, so this person is more aware of what's going on. It was very helpful. (EFX29)

Given the linguistic diversity in Quebec's Indigenous communities, it makes sense to offer courses not only in French and in English, but also in Indigenous languages (Dufour, 2015b; FECQ, 2017; Jean, 2020; RCAAQ, 2020). What's more, whether at the post-secondary level or in the corporate setting, Indigenous students should be able to converse in their mother tongue to understand better the concepts seen in class (Caron & Asselin,

2022; Cornellier, 2015; De Canck, 2008; Jean, 2020). Implementation of such measures requires time and resources to avoid cherry-picking and tokenism (Wallace, 2018). Institutions need to consult with Indigenous communities to create programs that respond to their worldview and needs (ACCC, 2008; Future Skills, 2022). For example, at Trent University in Ontario, the *Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences* program includes both Indigenous and scientific knowledge, which is taught by Indigenous and non-Indigenous experts.¹² The same approach is favoured by UQAT's School of Indigenous Studies, the only multidisciplinary and intercultural university department in Quebec,¹³ as well as Algoma University, whose mission is to cultivate intercultural learning between Indigenous and other communities in Northern Ontario.¹⁴ Several Canadian universities are also working to improve Indigenous representation in their STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) programs (CBC, 2020a). In many programs in Canada, whether in post-secondary institutions or in the industry, training is offered on the territory, often with the collaboration of Elders (Barber & King, 2017; CBC, 2020b; Haley & Fisher, 2014; McCreary, 2013ab).

4.2 Programs and courses exclusively for Indigenous students

While many Indigenous students would like to see more of their peers studying in post-secondary institutions (Gauthier et al., 2015; Joncas, 2013; Rodon, 2008; Tunison, 2007), the possibility of offering programs or courses reserved for Indigenous students meets with divided opinions. In a study of 18 Indigenous students at Université Laval, 11 said that creating reserved courses risked creating segregation (Rodon, 2008). On the other hand, the measure seems to be appreciated in several post-secondary institutions that offer training that specifically targets members of Indigenous communities. The Certificate in Indigenous Governance (UQAT), the short undergraduate program in Archaeology for First Nations (UQAC), or the First Nations-specific AECs (CAT) (FEC, 2017; Savard et al., 2021) are examples. There are also institutions specifically designed for and by

¹² Trent University. (s.d.). *Indigenous Environmental Studies and Sciences*. <https://www.trentu.ca/iess/>

¹³ UQAT. (s.d.). *L'École d'études autochtones*. <https://www.uqat.ca/uqat/departements/ecole-etudes-autochtones/>

¹⁴ Algoma University. (s.d.). *Convocation. Thunderbirds and the entire AU community look forward to celebrating with you!* <https://algomau.ca/>

Indigenous, such as the Kiuna Institution in Quebec or the First Nations University of Canada in Saskatchewan (Axtra, 2020; CMEC, 2019; Dufour, 2015a). For example, for the year 2023, the retention rate at Kiuna Institution was 83.9% (GOFN8).

4.3 Flexibility in teaching

Offering flexibility in educational pathways promotes success among Indigenous people (Cornellier, 2015; Hutchings et al., 2019; LeBlond & Brown, 2004; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2004; Miller, 2005; RCAAQ, 2020). That's why it's important to offer several types of pathways: short programs, cumulative programs, inter-order gateways, skills portfolios, recovery of flunked courses, etc. (Bérard, 2023; Jean, 2020). Some of these programs are designed for adults over 21 years who have already attended university and wish to re-enroll. Such is the case with the University of Manitoba's *Inner City Social Work Access Program*, which allows adults who have faced obstacles in their lives to be admitted without prerequisites and to take preparatory courses. To increase the number of Indigenous students in engineering programs, Concordia University offers the *Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program*, which prepares Indigenous students who do not have the prerequisites in math and science¹⁵ in a year and a half (three semesters). It is also important to organize course offerings that respond to the realities of students, especially those who live in communities far from post-secondary institutions. For example, UQAT offers the possibility of teaching courses in communities according to a flexible and condensed schedule with the aim of accommodating students who often must reconcile work, family, and studies (Cornellier, 2015; Savard, 2012). Flexibility and variety in training encourage persistence in school (Brown, 2003; CCCP, 2010; CMEC, 2012; Cornellier, 2015; Cox & Mill, 2015; Cunningham & Parker, 1998; Davidson & Hawe, 2010; Dufour, 2015b; FNILMAC, 2013; Gauthier et al., 2015; Holmes, 2006; LeBlond & Brown, 2004; Malatest et al., 2004; MiHR, 2020b; Vladicka, 2015). For example, in the Abitibi-Témiscamingue region, CRÉA Kitci-Amik offers several training courses in Pikogan, Lac-Simon and Val-d'Or according to the schedule and calendar of the Indigenous communities (OHX36). This flexibility is important since it increases

¹⁵ Concordia University (s.d.). *Kaié:ri Nikawerà:ke Indigenous Bridging Program (BEng)*. <https://www.concordia.ca/academics/undergraduate/indigenous-bridging-beng.html>

accessibility to post-secondary studies for students who would not otherwise be able to participate. Through initiatives such as distance learning, evening classes, and intensive courses, post-secondary education can be accessible to students who are parents, have full-time jobs, or live in remote communities (Davey, 2019; Fontaine, 2017; Savard et al., 2021). In Quebec, four universities offer training in Indigenous communities (Concordia, McGill, UQAM and UQAT) (Jean, 2020). Some CEGEPS also travel to Indigenous communities to provide training. For example, it is possible to the *Attestation of College Studies (ACS)* in *Techniques d'intervention en milieu carcéral (Techniques of Intervention in a Prison Setting)* from the CAT in Wendake at the Centre de développement de la formation et de la main-d'œuvre Huron-Wendat (CDFM) as part of a collaborative agreement between the two institutions. The Kiuna Institution offers several programs in the Wabanaki community of Odanak. Early childhood education programs are also offered in the communities of Kawawachikamach, Waskaganish, Mistissini, and Akulivik by Cégep de Saint-Félicien (Roy, 2022; Cégep de Saint-Félicien, 2017). Several universities and colleges offer distance and hybrid courses. Some of these are designed to meet First Nations, Inuit, and Métis contexts (Barber & King, 2017; Bérard, 2023; CCC, 2013; FNILMAC, 2013; Jean, 2020; MiHR, 2020b). During interviews, the need for flexibility in training programs was emphasized on several occasions:

The Indigenous at our CEGEP are champions of perseverance (...). [One student] took five or six years to get through his mineral technology program. He found himself on his own, a single parent with a young daughter because he lost his partner. At one point, he was in the internship program, and then it was very complicated for him. Of course, he chose the little girl. Our team of Mineral Technology teachers helped him a lot. There was a possibility of an internship up north, in Fermont or Labrador, I don't remember exactly, but that meant he'd be gone for a whole week. So, the teachers would release him from his classes, and he'd go for a full week to work in the mine, and then he'd come back for a week. When he was at the mine, he was released from his work hours, about two hours a day, so he could work on his things (...). There was an accommodation like that to get him through. He really wanted to finish his studies in mineral technology first so he could be a good role model for his daughter. (EFX32)

Distance training is popular with Indigenous students who must often balance work, family life, and studies. However, the approach is not perfect, and institutions need to be aware of the problems and discomforts it generates (Davey, 2019; Fontaine, 2017). There are seven

factors that contribute to the success or failure of online training for Indigenous students (Davey, 2019):

1. Perceptions about distance education;
2. Strategies to maintain motivation;
3. Instructional design of courses;
4. Quality of relationships between teachers and students in digital learning environments (DLE);
5. Opportunity to make suggestions for improvements;
6. Quality of support (including ease of use of technology);
7. Students' perception of the online experience (e.g., psychological and financial effects).

When institutions offer online courses, they must ensure accessibility to technical support services specific to this mode of learning (Hamel et al., 2022; Vladicka, 2015). It is also necessary to ensure that distance students have a virtual social network and that they have access to training on the use of technologies related to digital learning environments (Fontaine, 2017; Savard et al., 2021). Students must also have access to a place in the community that is conducive to concentration with an adequate Internet connection to promote success.

Since the concept of success may be different among the Indigenous, evaluation methods should be rethought (CCA, 2007; Dufour, 2015b; Gauthier et al., 2015; Montpetit & Lévesque, 2005; Secrétariat des commissions de l'Assemblée nationale du Québec [SCAQ], 2007). It is recommended that exam and assignment formats be varied and that family responsibilities be considered in submission dates (Cazin, 2005; RCAAQ, 2020):

I'd often let them express themselves in their own language. Sometimes they even made oral presentations, but I'd let them do it in their own language. When there was, for example, a self-assessment by peers (...). Of course, I can't do that all the time because, if you want to assess, you have to understand, but I found that including moments like that helped them to understand. (EFX29)

One participant reminded us of the importance of exam preparation for people who return to school, who have sometimes failed several times throughout their lives:

Given that an exam, for them, means failure because that's what they've experienced in the past. Well, we're working on the approach with special education teachers to ensure that it doesn't become a torture chamber, the examination room (...). There are accommodations we can put in place that are recognized by the Ministry of Education. It's clear that we'll apply every possible measure to help the student. Helping the student doesn't mean doing the exam in his or her place. It simply means that if he's entitled to an extra 20 minutes to do his exam, we'll give it to him. (OHX39)

Vacations could also be planned to correspond to the Indigenous calendar (*Moose Break*, *Goose Break*, cultural weeks, pow-wows, etc.) as is done in some post-secondary training and in the mining industry (Baker, 2017; Caron, 2020; Caron & Asselin, 2022; MiHR, 2020b; O'Faircheallaigh, 1995). Concerning assessments, teachers use several strategies to support the Indigenous in their studies. For example, one might be to offer more time to complete an examination to students for whom English or French is not their first language (Gauthier, et al., 2015; Gingras-Lacroix, 2019; Santerre, 2014) or to provide supplementary materials such as dictionaries and grammars (RCAAQ, 2020). Instead of handing in a written assignment, the teacher may ask students to give an oral presentation (Gauthier, et al., 2015).

4.4 Internships and training at mining sites

In the Canadian mining industry, job and mine site preparation programs are available (Caron, 2020; Caron & Asselin, 2022; CBC, 2021; MiHR, 2023). In the *Mining Essentials* program, instructors provide theoretical classroom training in 13 job-readiness (non-technical and preparatory) skills over 240 hours as they follow typical mining schedules. Enrichment activities take place over 120 hours in several forms and include site visits, sharing circles, lectures by Indigenous workers as well as ceremonies (MiHR, n.d.). The training programs are designed to achieve several objectives: professional and social integration, adaptation to the industrial context, understanding of corporate standards and policies, and discovery of the various possible trades in the industry. These programs touch on many topics (health and safety, emergency procedures, sustainable development, success stories, employment opportunities, company policies, etc.) while they offer the

opportunity to visit a mine site and try out potential trades (Caron, 2020). In this sense, post-secondary educational institutions should offer mining internships in a variety of jobs (FNILMAC, 2013; Hodgkins, 2017; McCreary, 2013ab; Russel, 2013; Stewart, 2013). It is important to give Indigenous students the opportunity to visit mining sites, as early as possible in their training, to put their learning into practice (Caron, 2020). For example, in Russell's (2013) study of a mining company in the Yukon, a participant mentioned the following:

When I learned to mend a fish net, I sat and watched my grandmother or grandfather, and they said this is how you do it, and I watched them. That's one of the things with Aboriginal people that I have always stressed that had to happen, you have to have hands-on training as opposed to simply classroom and online learning. (Russell, 2013, p. 72-73)

This notion was also mentioned by an Anicinape participant:

Doing a theoretical course at the mine, that's different. People really had fun in that kind of training. The course cost nothing; it was paid for by [the company]. (...) You go and get an Indigenous person and say, "You're coming to do your whole course at the mine". Whew! It makes all the difference (...). I'm so glad they [the CFPs] have started doing on-the-job training because that's another key to success, I think. (OFA35)

These experiences are important if you are to have the chance to try out a trade or profession, but they are also intimately linked to the Indigenous way of learning by imitation. Indeed, in Anicinapemowin (the language of the Anicinapek people), the term education is translated as *kinomage*, the *kino* particle meaning "to imitate". After colonization, the term used to designate the teacher was *Kikinôhamâgewîninî*, which translates as "the person who shows the signs or is imitated" (Saint-Arnaud, 2009). In this way, internships are conducive to experiential learning, which is well suited to the Indigenous way of learning by observation.

Before they take action, what teachers need to understand properly is that the Indigenous often need to see the end goal and then understand how to get there instead of saying, "We'll take a few steps, and then we'll get to the end goal". They need to see the goal and then they need to work in reverse. (EHX27)

In addition to the importance of training to develop the cultural skills of staff, several participants pointed out that it is also necessary to ensure that the internship environment is ready for the arrival of Indigenous students:

I think that when it comes to training, just as when a student comes out of training, the company has to be ready to welcome him (...). Compared to my previous experience, we put a lot of energy into preparing young people to enter training, they came to training, they were very successful, then after that, when it came to welcoming them into the company, that's when it became difficult and when there were issues at stake. Perseverance in employment wasn't necessarily there. (EHX19).

[The CEGEP] also works with partners, and then we try to make them aware of the Innu because sometimes it's important to be open, to be accommodating, to be sensitive to these issues, to be kind to these students. After that, when they go out into the world of work, if they have a bad experience at that level because the companies that take them on internships don't have the same approach, they don't have the same vision as us, well, that can be a hindrance. They might be completely disillusioned, then come back here and say that the experience they had over there was atrocious. They may decide not to continue. There's work being done with companies to make sure they're welcoming and kind to First Nations trainees. I know that the Mineral Technology program has come a long way in working with partners who receive trainees from our region. (EHX30)

Furthermore, in the focus groups, the importance of pairing Indigenous students for internships was also raised (GIFI1). During the interviews, a few people mentioned the need to offer work-study training, especially in the case of people returning to school with children, “We need to put bread on the table as soon as possible. Spending two years in school isn't ideal either. I'd say we need accelerated training, in parallel with work-study” (OHA40). In some institutions, it's already possible to do this, “In the context of mining training, there are internships, and we can offer them on a work-study basis” (ATE) » (EHX30).

5. Recruitment

Several similar recruitment strategies are used in the mining industry and in education. The challenge is, among other things, to publicize the variety of possible occupations in the mining industry:

We also need to identify areas of employment. In recent years, I've noticed that we have a lot of truck drivers, but people don't know that there are other avenues [in mining]. There are computer technicians, nurses, etc. (...). [The mining companies] could come out once in a while and show what mining is all about. What it takes [in terms of studies]. Because yes, there are certain jobs that you don't have the choice of training like everyone else, but what are the criteria for getting that job? (OHA40)

To this effect, several initiatives are being implemented in Indigenous communities to enable dialogue between communities, education and business (Caron & Asselin, 2022; Holmes, 2006; Mareschal & Denault, 2020; McCreary, 2013a; MiHR, 2020b; Russell, 2013), such as campus visits, visits to Indigenous communities, presentations in the context of Indigenous events, distribution of documents to Indigenous students, visits to Indigenous schools, advertising in Indigenous media, and promotional campaigns aimed at Indigenous people (Dufour, 2015b; Holmes, 2006).

In recruitment, it's about personalizing a poster, putting a touch of Indigenous culture. Just putting “*Kwe! Wachiya!*” on a job posting, we First Nations are visual. So, I'm walking around town and I see a sign with an eagle on it or something, and it says “*Kwe! I tend to stop and go take a look. It's about taking First Nations and Inuit culture into consideration in the recruitment process.*” (OFA35)

You mustn't come in as a salesman, selling things. Nor should you come in as an expert who's just arrived in the community. I often take a more needs-based approach. How are you doing? Are there training needs in the community? Then, take a good look at what we have [in terms of programs], maybe there's something that could meet your needs. The approach is important. To arrive and listen before trying to impose things. (EFX29)

It is important that recruitment information be easily accessible on multiple platforms and available in French, English, and Indigenous languages (guides, social media, community radio, website, etc.). Having a website specifically for Indigenous students is also appropriate (CMEC, 2012; Hamel et al., 2022; MiHR, 2020b). Recruitment materials

should feature success stories from Indigenous communities (CIAFT, 2016; FECQ, 2017; FNILMAC, 2013; Hodgkins, 2017; INMQ, 2017; MiHR, 2020a). Representatives of Indigenous communities pointed out that sometimes, when they help their members find training, the services offered for Indigenous students can help guide their choice:

Before referring someone to a program, I look at the institution, at what kind of environment and services they offer (...). Do they offer support? A cultural centre? Some institutions are good in their approach with Indigenous people (...). For example, Nipissing University offers a wide range of services for Indigenous students. (OFA33)

It's important to have resource persons who act as a link between the communities and the educational institution for recruitment purposes. These people can perform several tasks to accompany students on their way to post-secondary education. For example, they can help students fill out admission applications, advise them on career choices, and direct them to the right resources according to their needs (RCAAQ, 2020). Visits to mining companies during which future students can try out the various possible trades are fundamental at this stage to encourage training and career choices (Caron, 2020). The lack of career guidance services in Indigenous communities is a factor that hinders the transition to various post-secondary institutions and the job market (Axta, 2020; CMEC, 2012). It should be noted that in many CEGEPs the management of specific programs for the Indigenous is often entrusted to continuing education. As a result, few if any recruitment activities are carried out specifically for the Indigenous in regular programs (EFX22).

Educational institutions should implement an admissions protocol that considers the experience of Indigenous applicants (APCCC, 2010; Dufour, 2015b; Holmes, 2006; Jean, 2020; Joncas, 2013; Lefevre-Radelli & Jérôme, 2017; Loiselle & Legault, 2010; Malatest et al., 2004; Ricci, 2015; Rodon, 2008). At UQAT, a majority of Indigenous students were admitted on the basis of experience (Bérubé and Cornellier, 2016), which offers more flexibility than admission on the basis of a college diploma. The committee that reviews applications should also include Indigenous members (Ricci, 2015; Labun, 2002). Some educational institutions reserve places for Indigenous students in certain programs subjected to quotas (Bérard, 2023; Jean, 2020; RCAAQ, 2020). One participant from a

vocational training centre mentioned that his institution reserved places specifically for Indigenous students:

We always have a minimum of three places reserved per cohort of 22. And if there are more, we're ready to go further. (...) If there are a lot of them one year, if they manage to get through the selection test, we don't count them in these reserved places. We really do reserve places for those who have more difficulty in French, writing, or understanding the test questions. (EHX23)

Focus group and interview participants repeatedly suggested the importance of “implementing Indigenous-specific interview templates” (MHI15) in addition to setting recruitment targets for Indigenous students.

If we look specifically at vocational training centres, they don't necessarily have targets for getting, say, an “x” percentage of Indigenous students. You don't see them in the communities. (...) Not everyone is doing their job. It's a challenge to make options known. We want to get involved, but not just the mine should do it, nor just the community. (OHA40)

6. Financial support

When setting up financial assistance programs, factors such as family situation, remoteness, and lack of community support must be considered (Bérard, 2023; Hutchings et al., 2019; Jean, 2020; Malatest et al., 2004; RCAAQ, 2020; Trudgett, 2014). Several post-secondary institutions have set up incentive scholarship programs to support students in different situations (Indigenous women, parents, attendance, reconciliation, involvement, excellence, etc.) (Bérard, 2023; CMEC, 2012; FNILMAC, 2013; Hodgkins, 2017; Jean, 2020; Malatest et al., 2004; Ricci, 2015; Vladicka, 2015). There are also emergency grants for students with financial problems (Jean, 2020; Malalest et al., 2004). Some institutions offer financial assistance to allow students to return home mid-course (MiHR, 2020b). For example, the *Nunavut Sivuniksavut* program in Ottawa and Montreal provides Inuit students with airplane tickets to return to their communities. Support should also be available to help students prepare and submit scholarship applications (Hamel et al., 2022). Many mining companies now offer scholarships for Indigenous students. As one participant put it, “We've also just started offering scholarships. We want to help encourage the community in their studies. Our scholarships start in high school and go all the way to university” (MHI15). Some mining companies also sponsor training courses for

Indigenous students. A CEGEP in the Côte-Nord region has also set up scholarships for First Nations students:

We created scholarships to promote school perseverance, resilience, and all that. So, for the past three or four years, we've been promoting these scholarships. (EHX30)

There are also a number of scholarship and funding programs offered by Indigenous organizations:

We have a range of employment and training programs and services that support the individual from the moment he or she sets an employment objective. Then we support them with training allowances. We also pay for registration, materials, and all that sort of thing. Then, during that process, we have follow-up agents who keep track of our customers, not only academically, but also their personal and social development. (OFA35)

A representative of another Indigenous organization mentioned, “We distribute funding throughout Eeyou Istchee, and our offices are also located in each community. So, in each community there is an employment counselor and my team, we have seven program development officers” (OHC38). In addition to bursaries, we need to ensure that financial assistance programs are well disseminated throughout the network of educational institutions (Caron, 2020; Hutchings et al., 2019; Malatest et al., 2004; Trudgett, 2009, 2013). This point was made in the focus groups, “In some cases, it's not necessarily that there isn't enough funding to support Indigenous students but that they don't know what programs are available to them“ (GEFX6; GOHX9; GMFI1). That said, some programs such as Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), have not been adjusted for inflation and have suffered cuts (Stonechild, 2006). As a result, band councils are faced with insufficient amounts to pay students and cannot accommodate them all (House of Commons, 2007). The amounts that Indigenous communities can disburse vary greatly from place to place (Paquette & Fallon, 2010; Ratel, 2019). This is also the case for urban Indigenous students. The Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec (FECQ) reported in 2017 that in Val-d'Or the Urban Aboriginal Strategy (UAS) did not fund college studies and mainly subsidized professional diplomas (DEP) (FECQ, 2017). Given the diversity of situations among Indigenous Peoples, educational institutions must ensure that financial aid structures are adequate and appropriate (CMEC, 2012; Holmes, 2006; McCreary, 2013; MiHR, 2020b).



Conclusion

There is no single measure that ensures the successful training of Indigenous students. Rather, it is the accumulation of measures to improve cultural safety at all levels and in all spheres of post-secondary education that leads to culturally relevant training. Best practices to address the key challenges faced by Indigenous students in post-secondary education include partnerships with Indigenous communities and organizations; resources, services, and support; staff training; curriculum and recruitment; and financial support. We need to maximize the number of best practices at all levels and avoid cherry-picking and tokenism. In the mining world, most of the best practices identified are like those used in post-secondary education but reframed for a workplace environment. The analysis tool developed offers post-secondary institutions a means of identifying areas where they could improve as well as several examples of actions that could be applied in their environment to provide a more culturally safe space.

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